DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 481 840 TM 035 352

AUTHOR	Stern, Sheldon M.
TITLE	Effective State Standards for U.S. History: A 2003 Report Card.
INSTITUTION	Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	103p.; With Michael Chesson, Mary Beth Klee, and Luther Spoehr.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; Pedagogical Content Knowledge; *State Standards; *United States History

ABSTRACT

This study reviewed and rated state academic standards for U.S. history. The researcher set three broad criteria for the review (1) comprehensive historical content; (2) sequential development; and (3) balance. The most recent standards bearing on U.S. history, even if termed "social studies," were reviewed. An essential element was that state history standards must acknowledge the key issues and events that comprise the whole U.S. story, including both inspiring and terrible events. Overall, state standards for U.S. history are not adequate. Eleven states earned honors ratings, and six of these did an "outstanding" job with U.S. history. Seven states got "Cs," but 31 states had not done even a minimally satisfactory job. No clear trends are evident. Neighboring states can score at opposite ends of the scale. A few general conclusions can be drawn about what makes a good set of standards. They have a biographical dimension, with a clear chronology and coherent sequence beginning in the early grades. They revisit topics covered in early grades in a more thorough and sophisticated way in later grades. They acknowledge the European origins of the United States while recognizing the contributions of non-Western people. History standards should discuss the origins and development of democratic ideas and institutions and give political history equal status with social and cultural history. They should be comprehensive and balanced, free of overt or covert ideological agendas. The weakest standards are shackled by "social studies" assumptions that pretend that chronology doesn't matter. An evaluation is presented for the standards of each state. An appendix contains six summary tables that list the states alphabetically and by state rank. (SLD)

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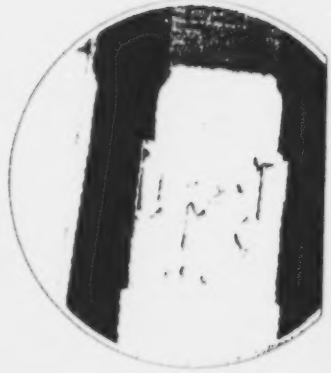
Effective State Standards for U.S. History:

A 2003 Report Card

Sheldon M. Stern



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Effective State Standards for U.S. History:

A 2003 Report Card

by Sheldon M. Stern

with Michael Chesson, Mary Beth Klee, and Luther Spoehr

September 2003

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Foreword

Chester E. Finn, Jr.

In the post-9/11 world, it's more important than ever for young Americans to learn the history of their nation, the principles on which it was founded, the workings of its government, the origins of our freedoms, and how we've responded to past threats from abroad.

A well-crafted K-12 curriculum has an obligation to assure that students be deeply immersed in U.S. history (as well as civics, geography, world history, and more) and that graduates be knowledgeable about America's past. Though schools cannot be held exclusively responsible for forging good citizens—that solemn duty is shared by parents, churches and myriad other institutions—they have a unique obligation to handle the "cognitive" side; i.e., to make certain that young people gain the requisite knowledge and intellectual skills.

In an era of "standards-based" reform, we now understand that the subjects most apt to be taken seriously and taught well are those for which the state sets high-quality standards.

Yet assessment after assessment and study after study shows that history is the core subject about which young Americans know *least*. The fraction of students (in grades 4, 8 and 12 alike) who reach the "proficient" level on tests administered by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is smaller in history than in any other field. The situation has not improved since 1987, when Diane Ravitch and I authored *What Do Our 17-Year Olds Know?*

Though U.S. schools include some superb history instructors who are as effective in the classroom as they are passionate about their subject, far too many teachers of history are people who have never seriously studied this field themselves. (They may have been certified as "social studies" teachers after majoring in sociology, psychology, or social-studies pedagogy.)

In an era of "standards-based" reform, we now understand that the subjects most apt to be taken seriously and taught well in our schools are those for which the state sets high-quality standards that make clear what teachers are expected to teach and children to learn; where the statewide assessment system regularly appraises how well those things are in fact being learned; and where the "accountability" system confers rewards and sanctions—on students, educators, and schools alike—according to how well they have succeeded in this teaching and learning.

In that context, however, U.S. history has not fared well. While almost every state requires students to sit through at least one course in this subject (typically in eleventh grade), history seldom even appears in statewide testing and accountability systems. Of the 24 states that have or intend to have high school exit exams by 2008, only nine include social studies among the subjects tested and, of the nine, just two (Mississippi and New York) test specifically in U.S. history.[1]

Unintended Consequences

Today, the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act of 2001 is the strongest force driving U.S. schools toward standards-based reform and stronger pupil achievement. Without intending to, however, NCLB may actually worsen the plight of U.S. history. By concentrating single-mindedly on reading, math, and science, it will likely reduce the priority that states, districts, and schools assign to other subjects. And by highlighting performance (or the absence thereof) in only those three core fields, it will focus the attention of state and community leaders on their schools' results in those subjects—and deflect their attention from others.

By concentrating single-mindedly on reading, math, and science, NCLB will likely reduce the priority that states, districts, and schools assign to other subjects.

A problem, yes, but one that states and schools can solve if they want to. NCLB is meant as a floor, not a

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ceiling. Nobody said schools ought not attend with equal fervor to other vital subjects in the curriculum. Moreover, forty-eight states (all but Iowa and Rhode Island) and the District of Columbia have already established academic standards in social studies, meaning that they have at least gone through the motions of detailing what they expect their teachers to teach and students to learn in this field.

Those standards are necessarily and properly the starting point for determining what America actually intends its young people to know about their nation's history. Insofar as a state's testing and accountability system pays attention to U.S. history, it will (or should) be "aligned" with the state's standards. Those same standards are likely also to drive teacher preparation, textbook selection, and much more.

NCLB is meant as a floor, not a ceiling. Standards are properly the starting point for determining what America actually intends its young people to know about their nation's history.

So they need to be taken seriously. They are the recipe from which the entire education system cooks. But how satisfactorily do today's state academic standards deal with U.S. history in particular? So far as we can tell, nobody has ever asked that question before. We at the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and Institute, and various other groups (e.g., American Federation of Teachers, Albert Shanker Institute), have periodically examined state social studies standards in general. In 1998 and again in 2000, Fordham's expert reviewers examined them with specific reference to history and (separately) geography. Penn State professor David Saxe carried out the history reviews. But he looked (as we asked him to) at history in general, not U.S history in particular.

After the 9/11 attacks and the enactment of NCLB, we realized that American history itself needs renewed attention in our schools and that a good first step would be to review state academic standards for social studies (or, wherever possible, for history or, best of all, U.S. history) with a particular eye to their handling of America's own history.

Taking the Measure

To conduct that appraisal, we turned to an eminent American historian, Sheldon M. Stern, who recently retired from his post as historian at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston where he served as the founder and director of the American History Project For High School Students. He has also recently authored *Averting "The Final Failure": John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings* for the Stanford University Press Nuclear Age Series. In addition to his outstanding scholarly credentials, Dr. Stern has been immersed in developing and evaluating K-12 standards in Massachusetts and has received numerous awards for his work promoting U.S. history in secondary schools. With financial assistance from the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, which has its own long and distinguished record as a sustainer and rebuilder of history in American schools, the Thomas B. Fordham Institute was able to engage Dr. Stern in this project and to enable him to recruit some expert help. Reviewing forty-nine sets of academic standards is no small undertaking.

Dr. Stern set three broad criteria for this review:

• **Comprehensive Historical Content:** Do a state's standards expect U.S. history to be taught comprehensively in the K-12 years, including the most important political, social, cultural and economic events and major historical figures? Do they set priorities for what students need to know about their nation's past, and spell them out so that curriculum directors, textbook authors, administrators, test-makers, parents and, above all, teachers themselves can organize their own work on the basis of these standards?

• **Sequential Development:** Do the standards present the teaching of U.S. history in a coherent and structured sequence that begins with a solid introduction in the early grades and is cumulatively reinforced through high school? Or do they sacrifice sequentially developed knowledge for process skills and goals—offering students nothing more than a haphazard hodgepodge of unrelated themes and topics?

• **Balance:** Are the standards evenhanded—reasonably free of hero-worship and glorification of the past at one extreme, and of politically correct posturing, distortions and omissions at the opposite extreme? Do the

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standards place historical events in context—avoiding presentism and moralistic judgments?

Having set these criteria with the help of expert colleagues and advisors, and with logistical support from Janice Riddell, Stern then obtained and reviewed the most recent available editions of the appropriate state standards documents bearing on U.S. history in the primary and secondary schools. You hold his findings in your hands—or are gazing at them on your computer screen.

State standards are the recipe from which the entire education system cooks.

What did he find? As shown in Tables1 and 2 (pages 93-95)there are bright spots, to be sure, but readers may not be surprised to learn that, taken as a whole, this is not a pretty picture. Eleven states earn honors grades (among which six did an "outstanding" job with U.S. history). Seven get Cs. But a whopping 31 states have not done even a minimally satisfactory job. (Stern confers eight Ds and 23 Fs.)

Is this better or worse than in the past? As explained above, we've never before reviewed state academic standards with a clear focus on U.S. history. In 2000, however, when David Saxe reviewed 46 sets of state standards for history in general, he awarded honors grades to ten states (including three As), Cs to 13, Ds to nine and Fs to 15. (See Table 6 for a direct comparison of results on the two studies.) Bottom line: not much has changed. Taken as a group, the states are doing no better—actually a bit worse—on U.S. history in 2003 than they did with history in general three years earlier. A handful of states are doing a splendid job. (Special mention should be made of Arizona and California for earning top marks both from Saxe in 2000 and from Stern in the current appraisal.) But far too many are in woeful shape.

Since Saxe conducted his review three years ago, thirty-six states have updated their social studies (or history) standards, and two states (Idaho and Montana) have written standards for the first time in social studies or history. This great amount of change is a further reason we asked Dr. Stern to undertake this latest study.

But the target continues to move. Stern and his associates examined standards that were written and available for public consumption as of May 15, 2003. In the months since, Arizona and Wyoming have already issued new standards, and we are aware of at least six other states whose history/social studies standards are presently undergoing revision.

Why Standards Matter

Education Cassandras can find plenty of bad news in this report but there is also good news. The fact that six states earned top marks from Dr. Stern on their standards' handling of U.S. history means that it's possible to do so. People wanting to know what good U.S. history standards look like should look with particular care at those produced by Indiana, California, and Alabama. They prove that it can be done right and done well.

No one, however, is so naïve as to believe that simply putting something into standards means it will be skillfully taught and thoroughly learned. Far more is required in our states, districts and schools by way of teacher knowledge and expertise, specific curriculum and instructional materials, and an aligned assessment and accountability system that makes plain to all that the state and its schools assign high priority to this subject and to students actually learning it.

We understand this. A state may have superb standards, but its children may end up learning little. Conversely, a child blessed with a gifted and knowledgeable teacher, or fortunate enough to be enrolled in a terrific school or school system, may end up knowing quite a lot of U.S. history even though his state has dreadful standards in this subject. Such is the complexity and variability of American education.

No one is so naïve as to believe that simply putting something into standards means it will be skillfully taught and thoroughly learned. A state may have superb standards, but its children may end up learning little.

Yet we declare that standards matter and that they may matter even more in U.S. history than in other sub-

jects. The heart of social studies for American children must be U.S. history. This subject provides the intellectual foundation on which competent citizenship rests. In addition to learning about the evolution of such important ideas as democracy, freedom, and equality before the law, the study of American history has a vital civic mission. For young citizens to understand the political, social and economic dimensions of their world and America's relationship to other nations, it is imperative to grasp the main lines of U.S. history. The story behind today's shared principles and institutions is found in our past. We must expect the custodians of our public schools to demand that this core subject assume its rightful place in the curriculum.

What We're Doing

This report is the third in a series of four related studies by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and Institute. *Where Did Social Studies Go Wrong?* identifies the problems that afflict the field of social studies in general and provides advice for educators. *Terrorists, Despots, and Democracy: What Our Children Need to Know* addresses the challenges of teaching children about the September 11 attacks, the war on terrorism, and the larger education issues associated with those events. Soon we will publish a review of widely used American and world history textbooks. We believe that, taken together, these reports will both elucidate the problems with social studies and provide teachers, textbook authors and policy makers with useful insights into how we can reconstruct this vital corner of the American curriculum.

Thanks are owed to many people for their manifold labors on behalf of this publication. Above all, to Sheldon Stern, who did most of the heavy lifting and who manages to be both a brilliant historian and also a clear-eyed analyst, passionate education reformer, and pleasure to work with. To his expert fellow reviewers, Michael Chesson, Mary Beth Klee, and Luther Spoehr. To Janice Riddell, whose vast experience in education reform, resolute commitment to educational excellence, and keen sense of organization added greatly to the feasibility of this entire effort. To the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation for underwriting it—and for many years of distinguished service to the cause of better K-12 history education. To David Saxe, whose earlier Fordham reviews paved the way and provided valuable points of comparison. To Kathleen Porter, veteran history teacher herself and now Fordham's associate director of research, who handled this project at our end. And to my long-time colleague (and Fordham trustee) Diane Ravitch, whose clear thinking and resolute dedication to better history teaching inspire and inform so much of our work.

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute seeks to improve the quality and effectiveness of American elementary-secondary education and to deepen the understanding of educators, policymakers, journalists, parents and the general public with respect to the problems that impede high-quality education in the United States and possible solutions to those problems. It shares staff, offices and trustees with the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and is designed to advance the education reform ideas that it also shares with the Foundation. Further information can be obtained from our Web site http://www.edexcellence.net/tbfinstitute/index.html or by writing us at 1627 K Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20006. The Institute is neither connected with nor sponsored by Fordham University.

Chester E. Finn, Jr., President
Washington, DC
September 2003

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Introduction

Wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the body of the people being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties; and as these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education in various parts of the country, and among the different orders of the people, it shall be the duty of legislators and magistrates in all future periods of this commonwealth to cherish the interests of literature . . . for the promotion of agriculture, arts, sciences, commerce, trades, manufactures, and a natural history of the country.

John Adams, "A Constitution or Form of Government for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," 1779 [2]

Why History Standards Matter

At the epicenter of the continuing and often acrimonious debate about what our children should learn in school has been the belief that rigorous state standards for history and social studies could significantly enhance both teacher preparation and student achievement. With the public eclipse of the 1994 proposed national standards for U.S. history (see Part III below) the essential decisions moved back to state capitals. In 1990, President George H.W. Bush and the 50 governors named history (along with English, math, science, and geography) as one of the core subjects in which every young American should become "proficient." History was also one of the essential subjects designated in Bill Clinton's "Goals 2000" legislation. But it remained the responsibility of the states to spell out just what is meant by "history" and by "proficient."

With the enactment in 2001 of the No Child Left Behind act, the states moved even more explicitly into the driver's seat with respect to history, because it is one of the core school subjects (along with foreign languages, art, music, health, geography, even writing) that this law did *not* place under Washington's oversight. Reading, math, and (a few years hence) science are subjects for which states now *must* set standards, create tests, hold schools responsible for student achievement, get federal approval of accountability plans, and subject themselves to comparisons and external Department of Education-approved assessments. Other subjects, like history, however, will continue to fly beneath the federal radar. Insofar as history is taught, studied, and learned, it will be the work of states, districts, schools, and individual teachers.

Insofar as history is taught, studied, and learned, it will be the work of states, districts, schools, and individual teachers.

State academic standards, consequently, are key. They spell out the content for which the state will hold its public schools responsible to impart to that state's children. They form the basis for statewide testing—to determine whether youngsters have in fact learned those things. They typically inform teacher training, professional development programs and textbook adoption decisions. They are the one place in which the state sets forth what it expects its future citizens to achieve in the area of historical literacy by the conclusion of their primary-secondary schooling.

State history standards must acknowledge the key issues and events that comprise the *whole* American story, including both the inspiring and the terrible events in our past.

Of course, in the real world, the writing of state history standards can sometimes turn out to be even less educationally driven than, for example, the training, certification, and hiring of history teachers. Education does not exist in a vacuum, and history standards have inevitably become tangled up in profound realities of American life, i.e., the anti-educational values promoted in popular culture and the bitter turf wars, culture wars, and legitimacy wars among interest groups at all levels of American society.

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What, then, should we expect, or hope, to find in them?

State history standards must acknowledge the key issues and events that comprise the *whole* American story, including both the inspiring and the terrible events in our past. It is one thing, for example, to push Columbus off his mythic pedestal and acknowledge that the arrival of Europeans in the New World was a catastrophe for Native Americans. It is quite another thing when teachers at a Massachusetts high school promote presentism—judging the past through the lens of today's values, standards, and norms—by encouraging their students to mark the 500th anniversary of Columbus' epic voyage by holding a mock trial and convicting him of "genocide" (a word that was not even invented until the late 1940s). The students concluded that, compared to Columbus, "Hitler looks like a juvenile delinquent," and their "findings" were dutifully and approvingly reported in local newspapers.

Effective history standards should equip teachers and students with the skills required to understand context, master historical thinking, and develop a sense of history.

In my hometown, an elementary school history teacher was likewise lauded in the press for teaching presentism. A classroom unit asked, "What if women had written the Constitution?" The youngsters were carefully instructed to write a constitution that not only abolished slavery, but legalized full equality without distinctions based on race and gender—in short, to embrace presentism by rebuking 18th century white males for failing to support a late 20th century agenda.

It is, without question, a lot easier for teachers to encourage simplistic and presentistic judgments than attempt to carefully study the mindset and motives that drove 15th century European explorers, or to understand that it makes no sense to judge eighteenth-century people by late-20th standards. It is a lot harder to teach young people to comprehend (as opposed to attack or defend) the world of Columbus, a world so different from our own, one in which individual rights and limits on government authority were not considered desirable or even imagined, and one in which harsh physical punishments by courts, parents, husbands, and teachers—not to mention slave owners—were taken for granted.

Presentism reduces history to a judgmental shooting gallery in which students fire at will at two-dimensional historical figures moving across a dimly lit background completely devoid of context.

Effective history standards, on the contrary, should equip teachers and students with the skills required to understand context, master historical thinking, and develop a sense of history. No rational person would criticize General Washington for not using jet fighter planes to defeat the British in the Revolutionary War. Everyone understands that it is laughable to project modern technology back into the past. But it is just as ludicrous to judge our predecessors for the absence of ideas and values (such as a belief in racial and gender equality) that were as absent from their reality as modern technology. Presentism reduces history to a judgmental shooting gallery in which students fire at will at two-dimensional historical figures moving across a dimly lit background completely devoid of context.

Nonetheless, several years ago, at a ten-day summer institute for history teachers sponsored by the National Council for History Education, many teachers began each day by complaining loudly that the sessions dealt exclusively with historical context and content instead of classroom teaching techniques. They had become accustomed to focusing on methods and process in their education schools and school systems. One member of the group, an exceptional but frustrated history teacher, tried unsuccessfully to persuade his peers that historical knowledge and context were far more important. He later confided that his annual departmental performance evaluation was "a farce" in which the evaluators never touched on substance—on what he knew and taught. They discussed "everything but history." Once he had suggested to his evaluation committee that they ask the following question: "What are the last five books you read in your field, and how have they changed your views and reshaped your teaching?" After

noting their awkward looks and rolling eyes, he recalled sardonically, he quickly dropped the suggestion.

Why Another Assessment of State History Standards: Rationale and Methodology

In the spirit of that intrepid but discouraged teacher, this review of state standards in American history has evaluated these essential documents from a *substantive* perspective. The overriding question in this appraisal was whether, insofar as one can tell from reading a state's history or social studies standards, students emerging from schools that conscientiously followed those standards would be adequately educated in American history—particularly in the origins and development of democratic institutions and values. To answer that core question, this assessment focused on three criteria: *Comprehensive Historical Content, Sequential Development,* and *Balance.* Each state's standards for U.S. history (or social studies standards containing U.S. history) were graded by the number of points received out of a maximum possible score of 10 for each of the three individual criteria and a maximum possible total score of 30: for example, 27 out of 30 = a score of 90 percent; 21 out of 30 = a score of 70 percent, etc.

1) Comprehensive Historical Content: Do the standards teach U.S. history comprehensively—including the most important political, social, cultural, and economic events and references to major historical figures? Do the standards set priorities for what students need to know about their nation's past when they graduate from high school—spelled out so that curriculum directors, textbook authors, administrators, test-makers, parents, and, above all, teachers themselves will be able to organize their expectations and work on the basis of these standards?

- The standards are rich and historically comprehensive. (10 points maximum)
- The standards are historically selective. (5)
- The standards are historically inadequate. (0)

2) Sequential Development: Do the standards teach U.S. history in a coherent and structured sequence that begins with a solid introduction in the early grades and is cumulatively reinforced through the high school years? Or do they sacrifice sequentially developed knowledge for process skills and goals—leaving students with a haphazard, non-cumulative hodgepodge of broad and unrelated themes and topics?

- The standards present U.S. history in a cumulative and coherent sequence. (10 points maximum)
- The standards present U.S. history in a partially cumulative and structured sequence. (5)
- The standards do not contain a coherent and cumulative U.S. history sequence. (0)

3) Balance: Are the standards evenhanded and reasonably free of hero-worship and glorification of the past at one extreme; and of politically correct posturing, distortions, and omissions at the opposite extreme? Do the standards place historical events in context—avoiding presentism and moralistic judgments?

- The historical information is consistently fair, balanced, and contextualized. (10 points maximum)
- The historical material is partially balanced and evenhanded. (5)
- Standards lack historical specifics on which to make a judgment: N/A (not applicable). (2)
- The standards convey an ideological and political agenda. (0)

The standards documents reviewed in this study were chosen after reviewing state education department websites and consulting, when necessary (by email or phone), with state education officials. The author is indebted to Janice Riddell for making these inquiries and seeing that the most up-to-date documents ended up on my desk. I also want to thank my friend and former colleague Paul Gagnon, who recently completed a study of state history standards focusing on the presence (or absence) of a strong civic core, for the Albert Shanker Institute.[3] Professor Gagnon generously made his files available for my assessment of U.S. history in the state standards.

The author, in consultation with Fordham Institute staff, historian Diane Ravitch, and the project's three

scholar-advisers (Professor Michael Chesson of the University of Massachusetts at Boston, historian Mary Beth Klee, and Professor Luther Spoehr of Brown University), worked out the criteria for evaluating the standards. After I began reading the state documents (which stacked up together are about three feet high), I regularly emailed individual state critiques to the project advisers and also sent the entire draft report at the halfway point and again at the end. The advisers conscientiously reviewed the drafts and provided invaluable suggestions and corrections on style and organization, historical substance and accuracy, and on whether, based on the specific strengths or flaws discussed in the draft reviews, the scores were too low or high. In sum, I relied on the logic and consistency of the scoring criteria, on the input of the scholar-advisers, on my decades of working with teachers and writing about history education, and particularly on my own training and experience as a historian.

Standards alone, of course, will not produce the kind of history teaching and learning that we so desperately need. But they can supply essential guidelines and benchmarks for curriculum planners, teachers, textbook writers, students, and parents.

Americans deserve to know whether schools are really doing their job or evading accountability by hiding behind often hollow rhetoric about "excellence" and "standards." Teachers, of course, should have wide latitude in the selection of materials, points of view, and interpretations for their classrooms. But that latitude does not include a lack of knowledge of essential historical material. Over some 20 years, for example, I asked scores of high school history teachers to explain the difference between the anti-slavery and abolitionist points of view in the 1850s. Fewer than thirty percent could do so. A teacher who cannot explain that distinction cannot adequately explain the coming of the Civil War.

Critics may charge that this approach stifles the freedom and creativity of teachers and students. But no one is suggesting restrictions on what teachers can teach or students can learn, any more than a municipal building code restricts the imagination of architects. Just as a building code is intended to ensure that every structure, no matter who designs and builds it, will meet minimal expectations with respect to safety and structural integrity, so should state standards set forth a set of minimal expectations for content.

Standards alone, of course, will not produce the kind of history teaching and learning that we so desperately need. But they can supply essential guidelines and benchmarks for curriculum planners, teachers, textbook writers, students, and parents.[4] The quality of state standards in U.S. history will surely help to determine whether our schools can respond effectively to the urgent educational challenges confronting American democracy in the 21st century.

The History Education Crisis

Many things changed, perhaps forever, for the United States on September 11, 2001—particularly for the nation's schools. Educators at all levels suddenly faced a critical new challenge: how to discuss and make sense of the terrorist attacks and place them in some intelligible historical context for bewildered, frightened, and sometimes angry students.

The 9/11 attacks were far more than a physical assault on America. They also represent a fundamental challenge to this nation's history and to the democratic vision captured so poignantly and powerfully in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. The terrorists and their supporters reject democracy, reject the separation of church and state, reject constitutional limits on government power, reject equality for women and minorities, reject equality or even tolerance for same-sex relationships (homosexuals were routinely buried alive by the Taliban), reject freedom of speech, thought, religion, and all foreign cultural influences. In short, they despise genuine multiculturalism. Americans, for example, can study Muslim culture and history in hundreds of colleges and universities, but American or Western studies programs are virtually non-existent in the Muslim world.

For many historians and history teachers, the post-September 11 debate refocused attention on the purpose and civic consequences of teaching American history and recalled the controversy that had erupted after

the 1994 publication of the proposed *National Standards for United States History*. Critics faulted those standards—drafted primarily by historians and history educators at UCLA—for a tendentious hostility toward America's history and for a divisive emphasis on group victimization and grievances. Defenders of the proposed standards, on the other hand, insisted that the critics were reactionaries seeking to preserve conventional history, which ignored unpleasant realities and marginalized women and minorities. The standards were eventually condemned by a 99-1 vote of the U.S. Senate and, as a topic of national discussion, pretty much vanished from sight. Outside Washington, however, especially in state education departments and among social studies coordinators, standards writers and publishers of history textbooks, the "national" U.S. history standards, later somewhat modified, remain very much alive.

Instead of correcting yesterday's distortions by presenting a balanced and complete national history, state standards and curricula often replace old distortions with new ones.

Serious educators recognize that ideologues on both sides of this debate will never be satisfied and will never revise or abandon their positions. They simply force inconvenient new facts through handy ideological filters, allowing them to preserve and even strengthen their long-standing assumptions. Ironically, activists on both extremes of the history standards debate desperately need each other for continued vitality. They exhibit, to borrow some psychological jargon, a curious form of co-dependency, feeding off each other's excesses in order to justify their own intellectual rigidity and intolerance—and the need for their continued existence and vigilance to guard against advances by the other side.

The fact remains, nonetheless, that the once-dominant approach to the American past, which disregarded or trivialized the lives and contributions of women and minorities, has been replaced for some time now by a new, more inclusive and diverse history. Comparing, for example, Samuel Eliot Morison's *Oxford History of the American People*, a best-selling Book-of-the-Month Club selection in 1965, with just about any textbook of today provides vivid confirmation of this change in perspective. Three-quarters of the American people were virtually absent from this once popular and in other respects useful book. Nearly four decades ago, that was the norm, not the exception, and few seemed to notice or to care.

Today's students can readily identify Sacajawea and Harriet Tubman but often can barely discuss Washington or Jefferson—except as slave owners.

However, instead of correcting yesterday's distortions by presenting a balanced and complete national history for American students, state standards and curricula often replace old distortions with new ones. In classrooms all over the U.S., the struggle to include those previously excluded has frequently produced an equal and opposite reaction, much like Newton's Third Law, requiring the exclusion of those previously included. Today's students can readily identify Sacajawea and Harriet Tubman but often can barely discuss Washington or Jefferson—except as slave owners. Political history has been all but abandoned in American schools and textbooks, but politically correct distortions, half-truths, omissions, and lies are thriving. For instance, a teacher in Milwaukee states bluntly that the main thing fifth and sixth graders need to know about Washington is that the first U.S. president was a rich, white slave owner. She also teaches her students that Eli Whitney "stole his invention [the cotton gin] from a woman who didn't patent it." When asked for the source of this claim, she replied, "Another teacher told me."[5] The once well-known story of the growth and expansion of American democracy and human rights is barely perceptible in many state standards and curricula.

Books upon which teachers rely, unfortunately, often advise them to fight the last war. James Loewen's very popular *Lies My Teachers Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (1995), widely used by social studies and history teachers, illustrates the problem. Loewen, a sociologist, argues that the American history textbooks he studied are dominated

by racism, hero-worship, super-patriotism, and shallow optimism. As an illustration, he asserts, "As recently as 1950," a popular textbook declared, "'As for Sambo, whose wrongs moved the abolitionists to wrath and tears, there is some reason to believe that he suffered less than any other class in the South from slavery.'" As *recently* as 1950? Perhaps time has stood still for Loewen, but no teacher could survive for a single day in a mainstream American high school or college classroom today trying to teach such nonsense.

Political history has been all but abandoned in American schools and textbooks, but politically correct distortions, half-truths, omissions, and lies are thriving.

Loewen writes as if textbook authors believed Harry Truman were still president and the civil rights revolution had never happened. He seems to barely acknowledge the fact that the vast new literature on black survival, coping, and resistance during the eras of slavery and Jim Crow has been thoroughly integrated into current textbooks and curricula. His "study" is based on twelve U. S. history textbooks, some of which are nearly 30 years old and even the most recent of which are completely obsolete. Long-established distortions may linger in a few reactionary backwaters or in old textbooks still used in poor school districts, but he gives no reason or evidence to believe that this is the case. Loewen should be highlighting the fact that the anachronistic material he criticizes has been dramatically revised in current texts and is actually the mirror image of what is being taught in American schools today.

Loewen also has tapped shrewdly into multicultural hostility toward the ideas and achievements of so-called Eurocentric, dead, white males by reinvigorating the historically unsubstantiated notion that the Iroquois Confederation was "a forerunner" of the Constitution and played a significant and substantive role in the debates at the 1787 Constitutional Convention. The Philadelphia discussions, he reports, "referred openly to Iroquois ideas and imagery." These false claims, not surprisingly, have turned up in a number of state history standards.

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In fact, the major principles and precedents that shaped the U.S. Constitution were derived largely from ideas about limiting executive power, separating government functions, and assuring frequent local and state popular elections, ideas that were first tested in the new state constitutions (never mentioned by Loewen) drafted between 1776 and 1780. The authoritative index to Max Farrand's documentary history of the Convention deliberations, and the 1987 James Hutson Supplement (which includes recently discovered documents), do not contain a single reference to the Iroquois or their Confederation. Likewise, the extensive marginal notes made by John Adams in more than a hundred books in his personal library, which include his comments on virtually every important political and philosophical idea of the time, never mention the Iroquois League. The Founders had only limited knowledge or understanding of Iroquois traditions, and there is no evidence of direct influence. But Loewen's book, with sales in the hundreds of thousands, carries far more weight with teachers than Farrand, Hutson, and Adams combined.[6]

In the wake of September 11, such relentless shadow boxing is more destructive than ever. Loewen is right on one point: neither democracy nor truth is well served when students, cheered on by conservative ideologues, study a sterilized and heroic version of American history that downplays conflict, injustice, and violence, and dismisses critical questions as unpatriotic. But neither will truth and democratic institutions flourish if young people swallow the distortions and half-truths promoted by leftist ideologues like Loewen, who dominate the social studies establishment in our schools, the faculty in our graduate schools of education, and the history and "studies" departments in our colleges and universities. Young Americans are

being consciously taught to hate and be ashamed of their nation's history and to believe that America is a uniquely evil and oppressive society.

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Do state history standards stress, or in many cases even mention, the distinctiveness and importance of our democratic heritage? Or, is the nation often ignoring John Adams's admonition that wisdom and knowledge, "diffused generally among the body of the people," are essential "for the preservation of their rights and liberties." In the 1990s, even at the most "elite" colleges and universities, U.S. history is no longer required, and it is now routine for students to earn bachelor and even graduate degrees without ever studying their own national past. This situation is disgraceful and dangerous. Yet few in higher education show much interest in the civic implications of widespread historical ignorance among their students. When a private organization recently administered a set of American history questions from the National Assessment in U.S. history to a selection of seniors at America's top colleges, four out of five received grades of D or F: "They could not identify Valley Forge, or words from the Gettysburg Address, or even the basic principles of the United States Constitution."[7]

As for those entering college, historical ignorance is even more widespread. In the 2001 National Assessment in U.S. history, barely one out of ten high school seniors performed at or above the "proficient" level. More than half scored below "basic," even lower than their scores in math, science, or reading. We should not be surprised, then, that young Americans vote in steadily shrinking numbers and seem disengaged from, if not openly contemptuous of, the democratic process itself—and are, paradoxically, more vulnerable than ever to the dumbing-down of political discourse.

Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David McCullough recently declared, after twenty-five years of teaching and lecturing regularly at colleges and universities, "I don't think there's any question whatsoever that the students in our institutions of higher education have less grasp, less understanding, less knowledge of American history than ever before. I think we are raising a generation of young Americans who are, to a very large degree, historically illiterate." We shouldn't blame the students, however, McCullough adds. "The problem is the teachers so often have no history in their background. They are working at high school and grade school levels with lesson plans. Very often they were education majors and graduated knowing no subject." Historical ignorance, the late Christopher Lasch observed, has undermined a sense of attachment to our democratic heritage among the educated elite, including college students: "Patriotism certainly doesn't rank very high in their hierarchy of virtues. . . .Theirs is essentially a tourist's view of the world—not a perspective likely to encourage passionate commitment to democracy."[8]

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Research and term papers in U.S. history have all but disappeared from American secondary schools, and good writing is rarely expected of even college-bound students. "Students come to college with no experience in writing papers," *Concord Review* editor Will Fitzhugh observes, "to the continual frustration of their professors, and employers of college graduates, for instance at Ford Motor Company, have now had to institute writing classes for them before they can produce readable reports, memos, and the like." The option of writing a serious history essay is not available in even the best state social studies and history standards—despite the fact that the *Concord Review* has demonstrated since 1987 that high school students are capable of doing exemplary historical research and writing.[9]

Even humor is a casualty of escalating historical ignorance. Several years ago, a witty spoof purported to ask major figures from the past, "Why did the chicken cross the road?" The mock responses included, Locke: "Because he was exercising his natural right to liberty."

Marx: "It was a historical inevitability." Lincoln: "The world will little note, nor long remember, why this chicken crossed the road." FDR: "This administration will establish an agency—the Poultry Crossing Control Commission—to monitor all road crossings by chickens." JFK: "Ask not why the chicken crossed the road; ask what road you can cross to build a better America." The author distributed the spoof to scores of seniors in Advanced Placement high school history classes but the students, almost without exception, seemed puzzled and embarrassed. To use a favorite student expression, they just didn't get it.

More than half of America's history teachers have little or no training in history and are rarely encouraged, evaluated or rewarded for their knowledge of subject matter.

This situation is not surprising once we recognize that more than half of America's history teachers have little or no training in history (or any academic discipline) and are rarely encouraged, evaluated or rewarded for their knowledge of subject matter. This fact often reinforces bad habits (such as depending exclusively on textbooks) and promotes simplistic or inaccurate history teaching. The "three worlds meet" paradigm, for example, derived from the contentious national history standards, has become conventional wisdom in many state standards and countless classrooms for explaining American history before 1620. The actual historical record, however, is far more elusive. No one really knows how many Africans were in the Virginia colony or in Spanish Florida before 1620—certainly not many. This small number of Africans could not possibly have represented the culturally and linguistically diverse "African world." Likewise, the small groups of Native Americans encountered by the earliest European settlers hardly constituted a "Native American world" since these separate tribes did not think of themselves as members of one group or race and were in fact quite diverse. And finally, the small settlements of Europeans from competing and often bitterly hostile nations did not represent a monolithic "European world." The "three worlds meet" is at best historical shorthand and at worst historical fiction.

Teaching About American Slavery and Freedom in Historical Context

American students, similarly, have every reason to be horrified by the history of slavery and the slave trade. But they should also be aware of crucial aspects of that history that are notably absent from the 1994 national history standards, from most current textbooks, and, most importantly, from virtually all state U.S. history standards and their politically tendentious curricula. Too many young people in the United States erroneously believe that slavery was unique to the United States. In fact, the U.S. does not bear special or even primary historical responsibility for slavery or the slave trade. Ninety-five percent of slaves in the trade from Africa to the Americas were sold in the Caribbean or South America. Brazil alone imported more than six times the number of Africans sold to the colonies in British North America.

Nor were Europeans solely responsible for initiating or facilitating the Atlantic slave trade. Slavery was deeply rooted in Africa long before Europeans began to purchase slaves, and the Atlantic slave trade likely could not have been created if this system has not already existed. Africans were initially "captured," "kidnapped," or "abducted" by other Africans and then sold into slavery. This process had been underway at least as early as the Middle Ages, when Muslim traders bought African slaves for the Baghdad market and beyond. During the centuries of the Atlantic slave trade, some 20 million Africans were first enslaved *by other Africans*. As many as half died while being forcibly marched to the Slave Coast *by their African captors*—before they ever laid eyes on a European or an American. The survivors were either purchased by white slave dealers or killed on the spot by African traders if they could not be sold. White slave merchants did not have to organize searches for their victims, as imagined in Alex Haley's *Roots*. Instead, they simply used African slave markets.

Indeed, major historians of slavery have concluded that virtually all Africans brought to the Western Hemisphere in the 17th and 18th centuries had already been enslaved *before* they left Africa. As Ghanaian diplomat Kofi Awoonor has written, "I believe there is a great psychic shadow over Africa, and it has much to do with

our guilt and denial of our role in the slave trade. We too are blameworthy in what was essentially one of the most heinous crimes in human history." Benin's ambassador to the U.S., Cyrille Oguin, also recently admitted, "We share in the responsibility" for slavery. American history standards writers never seem to mention these irrefutable but politically inconvenient historical facts.[10]

American students, of course, must understand that slavery *was* a terrible evil in the U.S., but American slavery was part of a vastly larger worldwide evil.

The author has repeatedly attempted to explore the full history of the slave trade at teacher workshops. On one occasion, two teachers insisted that they did not believe this account and refused even to accept the reading list. I replied that we were discussing history not religion, evidence not beliefs. They said my remarks were offensive and left the room. I also recently viewed an exhibit on African American history that included a large drawing of an 18th century scene on the African slave coast. In the center of the picture was a small table at which several white men were sitting. The artist drew the scene from behind the seated men, highlighting a group of magnificently dressed Africans, wearing jewelry and plumage and carrying ceremonial lances, who were standing and facing the table. Most of the picture, however, portrays African men, women and children in chains and yokes, anxiously watching the scene with abject terror in their eyes and on their faces. Their guards, armed with whips, spears, knives and guns, were also Africans. The grandees in front of the table were clearly negotiating to sell these captives and one was depicted making an offer by holding up his hand with three fingers raised.

Several viewers in the room declared emotionally that the drawing demonstrated why the United States should pay reparations for kidnapping the innocent people who later suffered the horrors of the Middle Passage. In short, they saw what they wanted to see, and what too many educators have taught them to see, and simply blocked out the plain truth in front of their eyes. The 49 U.S. history standards reviewed below, for all intents and purposes, also omit this crucial dimension of the history of the Atlantic slave trade.[11]

American students, of course, must understand that slavery *was* a terrible evil in the U.S., but American slavery was part of a vastly larger worldwide evil. Forced bondage has been the rule in most of human history. Freedom has been the exception, and freedom, not slavery, has been America's most lasting contribution to history. The British colonies in North America, from their earliest decades, evolved an unprecedented degree of political participation and democracy—extremely limited by today's standards, but extraordinary by the standards of their time, when only a tiny fraction of the people of the world had any say whatsoever in their own governance.

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Chattel slavery, nonetheless, became *the* contradiction in American life by the end of the 17th century and especially in the war for independence from Britain later in the 18th century—a fact that many Americans felt keenly at the time. Many revolutionaries, years before independence, feared that their own demand for liberty would seem hypocritical if they continued to hold other human beings as property. As the revolutionary movement spread, so did open condemnation of slavery. In 1780, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enacted a gradual emancipation law. The 1780 Massachusetts Constitution declared that *all* men were created free and equal; by 1783, when a group of slaves in Massachusetts sued for their freedom, the Supreme Judicial Court declared slavery unconstitutional. Even in the South, uneasy slaveowners attempted to convince themselves that slavery was merely a temporary evil. Most southern states banned the importation of slaves, and Virginia eased restrictions on manumissions. The ideology of the Revolution set in motion efforts to end slavery in every Northern state, although pockets of slavery persisted in states such as Rhode Island and New Jersey until the Civil War. And, ironically, the 1830 Census recorded that 3,775 free black slaveowners, living in the South, the border states, in several northern states and in the District of Columbia, owned 12,760 slaves.[12]

The American story has been one of expanding inclusion—for blacks, women and other minorities—though not without failures and the need for vigilance against backsliding.

Nevertheless, the central and undeniable paradox in the life of a Revolutionary leader such as Thomas Jefferson is that he wrote ardently about freedom while living off the forced labor of hundreds of slaves. Social studies curricula, however, usually pay scant attention to historical ambiguity and complexity—that is, to real historical knowledge. Instead, it is easier to write Jefferson off as a hypocrite and encourage students to ask the wrong question: How could a man who owned slaves presume to write about freedom? The right *historical* question is: How could a landed aristocrat, born and raised in a slave society and in a world in which slavery was the norm, become a passionate advocate of the then-radical ideas of demŏcracy and freedom? Jefferson helped to articulate a concept of liberty that would ultimately destroy slavery itself and extend citizenship beyond anything acceptable or even imaginable in his time. Despite the fact that he owned slaves, Jefferson transcended the limitations of his world. As social and political analyst Roger Wilkins recently wrote:

> America is often said to be a country founded on ideas: But if you examine that cluster of ideas, what it really represents is a civilized aspiration. People ask me how can I, a black man, be such an outspoken patriot. And my answer is that there is no example that I know in the literature of world politics that is more stunning than the American effort to raise black people out of legalized slavery and bring them, finally by the actions of the Supreme Court, into full citizenship. We have not fully succeeded yet, but we have surely transformed our country. We have seen our ideas civilize our culture. Not just for blacks. It has liberated white people as well.[13]

These late 18th century steps towards freedom often seem inadequate today. Black Americans, even when freed, remained second-class citizens at best—and complete emancipation would not come for nearly another century, only to be followed by decades of *de facto* and *de jure* segregation. But to judge the events of the late eighteenth century by our standards is presentism, not history. In a world in which slavery was taken for granted, the successes, not the failures, of the Revolution were exceptional and far more enduring—a perspective largely absent from most state history standards.

The Revolutionary legacy did not cease there. The American story has been one of expanding inclusion—for blacks, women and other minorities—though not without failures and the need for vigilance against backsliding. The fact that we now judge the Revolution as limited and incomplete is extraordinary testimony to the successful evolution of the values it inspired. The 1954 Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, for example, which ruled school segregation inherently unequal and unconstitutional, was based on the equal legal protection guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment of 1868, which had itself pushed the envelope of freedom beyond the more restricted definition of liberty in the Revolutionary era.

The terrible injustices of our past cannot be expunged, must be openly taught and must never be forgotten—but neither should we forget our nation's persistent pursuit of justice.

The terrible injustices of our past cannot be expunged, must be openly taught and must never be forgotten—but neither should we forget our nation's persistent pursuit of justice. The ideals of the American Revolution were not hollow or hypocritical and ultimately helped to enable later generations to pursue even greater freedom. The dream of all Americans has been to claim their rightful share of this unique legacy of freedom by persistently challenging the nation, as Martin Luther King, Jr. did so eloquently, to "rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed—we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

It takes real historical knowledge and understanding to help young people grasp the remarkable changes that actually emerged from the era of the American Revolution. As historian Lance Banning wrote to mark the bicentennial of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia:

From a twentieth-century perspective, the American Revolution may appear conservative and relatively tame. There were no mass executions. Social relationships and political arrangements were not turned upside down in an upheaval of shattering violence as they would be later on in France or Russia or any of a dozen countries we might name. To people living through it nonetheless—or watching it from overseas—the American Revolution seemed very radical indeed. It was not self-evident in 1776 that all men are created equal, that governments derive their just authority from popular consent, or that good governments exist in order to protect God-given rights. These concepts are not undeniable in any age. From the point of view of eighteenth-century Europeans, they contradicted common sense. The notions that a sound society could operate without the natural subordination customary where men were either commoners or nobles or that a stable government could be based entirely on elections seemed both frightening and ridiculously at odds with the obvious lessons of the past.[14]

It is the task of honest history education to be anchored in context and to reject corrosive and meaningless presentism. In 1788, James Madison grasped a reality that most social studies curricula ignore two centuries later: "If men were angels," he wrote in *Federalist 51*, "no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary. In framing a government that is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed; and in the next place oblige it to control itself." Why did Americans develop such beliefs at a time when no other country lived by them? The question itself is dead on arrival in the world of social studies education because it suggests American exceptionalism, and, consequently, it is virtually ignored in state U.S. history standards.

Teachers and educators must recognize that both extremes in studying U.S. history, whether right-wing sugar-coating and denial or left-wing demonization of America, are likely to foster a smug, superior and self-righteous attitude toward history. For many young people, declaring "he's history" is the ultimate put-down, because it consigns "him" to a past that seems entirely disconnected from their lives. It is, therefore, very difficult for students to understand the struggles and sacrifices undertaken by our predecessors to secure free speech, constitutional restraints on arbitrary government power, religious toleration, and expanding freedom for women, minorities and an increasingly diverse body of immigrants. Without such understanding, however, today's students will be handicapped as tomorrow's citizens. These historical accomplishments, profound as they were, are not permanent or irreversible and, even today, they seem only wistful goals in much of the world. If history teaches us anything, it is that all human achievements are imperfect and impermanent.

Teachers must recognize that both right-wing sugar-coating and denial or left-wing demonization of America are likely to foster a smug, superior and self-righteous attitude toward history.

Historical study in a democratic society, unlike present-centered social studies, should focus on how our predecessors struggled, sometimes succeeded, and sometimes failed. Genuine historical understanding should help young Americans become more discerning, less quick to judge, more capable of accepting the limits of their own historical experience and more aware of the wisdom of Virgil's lament for human experience: *Sunt lacrimae rerum* (There are tears in all things).

For summary tables with state grades and state rankings see page 93.

State Evaluations

ALABAMA

(Assessment based on Alabama Course of Study: Social Studies, *Alabama Department of Education Bulletin*, 1998, No. 18; Standards and Objectives (Social Studies) for the Alabama High School Graduation Exam, *Alabama Department of Education Bulletin*, 1998, No. 13; Today's Students, Tomorrow's Citizens: Pathways for Learning, Social Studies, no date, Alabama High Graduation Exam Task Force)

STATE REPORT CARD

Alabama

Comprehensive Historical Content: 9

Sequential Development: 10

Balance: 8

A

Total Score: 27 (90 percent)

The Alabama standards begin with two explicit affirmations: history and geography constitute "the central disciplines" in social studies and "solid content knowledge" is at the core of high academic standards. The standards define "historic [*sic*] literacy" as the ability to understand chronology, evaluate evidence, analyze the historical record, interpret cause and effect, and construct sound arguments. Alabama standards also make a commitment to "preparing students for full participation as twenty-first century citizens" in a "multicultural society" in which "multiple perspectives . . . are derived from different ethnic vantage points"—a potentially tricky balancing act because it makes the dubious assumption that one's "vantage point" is determined primarily by one's ethnicity.

Alabama students begin their historical sequence in the third grade with state history—particularly with a detailed introduction to Native American populations in Alabama both before and after the arrival of European settlers. The material is somewhat evasive on the origins of slavery, merely asking students to "demonstrate an understanding of the movement of Europeans and Africans to America." Indeed, the words "slave" or "slavery" do not appear in the third-grade curriculum. Perhaps there was a deliberate decision that third graders are too young to handle this issue.

By fourth grade, however, students are expected to discuss the impact of slavery on Alabama society from psychological, economic, religious, legal, family, music, and folk perspectives. The material on nineteenth-century Alabama is balanced and thorough, particularly on the Civil War and Reconstruction. Although "race relations" is the first topic to be discussed for the latter part of the century, the sequence omits the Ku Klux Klan, racial segregation, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, voter disenfranchisement, etc. Again, there is a legitimate question about how well this material can be taught at the fourth-grade level, but avoiding it entirely may not be the most constructive choice. The civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth century in Alabama, on the other hand, is covered in the fourth grade—a notable break in the historical sequence since the emergence of Jim Crow in Alabama has not been explicitly covered by that point.

Beginning with fifth grade, the Alabama sequence moves into high gear in the study of U.S. history. The material is, in virtually all respects, comprehensive, balanced, and coherent. The language is notably dispassionate on the Civil War and Reconstruction—a striking achievement for a state that was still struggling over desegregation just forty years ago. "Rising anti-Black sentiment" and the emergence of "white resistance groups" are discussed as part of the history of Reconstruction, but again the KKK and segregation laws are not explicitly included. Except for that important gap, however, the material on Reconstruction to 1900 in the fifth grade, and on America from 1900 to the present in the sixth grade, is as complete and challenging as any elementary school U.S. history curriculum I have ever seen.

Alabama students return to U.S. history in grades ten and eleven and study U.S. government in grade twelve.

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(Civics and citizenship, world history, and geography are covered in seventh through ninth grades.) This time around, the American history curriculum is even more detailed and demanding—building skillfully on the structure developed in the elementary grades. The early period is organized around the historically questionable "three worlds meet" theme, and students are also asked to analyze the role of free blacks and women in colonial America in terms of their lack of voting and property rights and their limited job and educational opportunities. One hopes that Alabama teachers will avoid presentism by making clear to students that, compared to the rest of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century world, white women, and to a much lesser degree free blacks, also had significant opportunities in colonial America. Indeed, some blacks (even in the South) managed to remain free, and the numbers of free blacks grew significantly in the Revolutionary and early national periods. Finally, the emergence of Jim Crow laws, missing entirely in the earlier grades, is covered in eleventh grade, and the civil rights revolution is revisited in twelfth.

In order to implement this social studies curriculum effectively, the Alabama High School Graduation Exam Task Force (composed of teachers, curriculum specialists, and administrators—no historians are listed as members) has prepared a comprehensive set of activities to help teachers and students prepare for the social studies portion of the required state exam. The task force recommends several instructional strategies and techniques for teachers; some of these, in an effort to appeal to students, have catchy titles: "Party Time!" (on the rise of the American party system) and "Making Up is Hard to Do" (on Reconstruction). However, these activities do not get bogged down in amorphous process skills (how to teach) and concentrate instead on *what to teach*—in seven key subject areas in U.S. history from the pre-Colonial era through World War II.

Alabama parents have every reason to be impressed with what their children are expected to know about American history—and will be tested on—by the time they complete the twelfth grade. This impressive knowledge base is even described in the state course of study as only "the *minimum* required content" [italics added]. From a substantive perspective—comprehensiveness, sequential/developmental coherence, and balance—the Alabama U.S. history curriculum is an outstanding example of education reform. If statewide assessments are carefully aligned with these standards, and if teachers know their stuff and do their part, Alabama is well on its way to providing its students with a first-rate U.S. history program.

ALASKA

(Assessment based on Content Standards for Alaska Students in History, Government, and Citizenship, 2002, Alaska Department of Education and Early Development)

STATE REPORT CARD

Alaska

Comprehensive Historical Content: **0**

Sequential Development: **0**

Balance: **2(NA)**

F

Total Score: **2 (7 percent)**

The Content Standards for Alaska Students quote Horace Mann's 1837 contention that raising standards and expectations inevitably produces higher achievement for more students. The introduction asserts that Alaskans came together a decade ago to bring those "higher standards and accountability to their public school system." Teams of educators worked "on curriculum frameworks, plans for how to teach the new standards, and how to integrate them into the classroom." The standards, we are told, "represent what Alaskans want students to know and be able to do as a result of their public schooling" in the ten core subject areas (English and language arts, math, science, government and citizenship, history, life skills, arts, world languages, technology). "The focus," the standards affirm, "has shifted from what goes into our education system to what comes out of it."

The core subject standards will supposedly achieve three primary goals:

1) Providing students and teachers with "a clear and challenging target."

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2) Focusing "energy and resources on the bottom line: student achievement."

3) Measuring "how well our students are learning and how well our schools are performing."

Regrettably, the rhetoric soars but the substance is missing. The history standards may "represent," but they do not adequately *specify*, "what Alaskans want students to know." The Alaska History Content Standards set up an organizing goal: "A student should understand that history is a record of human experiences that links the past to the present and the future"—a vague but reasonable starting point for elementary school students. But there is nothing in the document to suggest how, or even if, this limited goal will be achieved, or how it becomes more cumulatively complex, sophisticated, and demanding at the middle and high school levels.

In short, the Alaska History Content Standards have essentially no history and no content. Not a single historical event is identified for discussion in anything approaching specific detail. The history standards suggest, for example, that students can role-play a debate between patriots and loyalists in the American Revolution, but they do not specify any events or ideas about the Revolution that students must study. Likewise, students are asked to select five U.S. presidents "who [*sic*] you think have been the most influential in American history and defend your choices." Despite this nod to politics, however, political history seems missing entirely from the standards, and there is no indication that historical eras are discussed coherently at any particular grade. It is impossible to determine, from this document, what students will be exposed to at any grade level, and most importantly, there is nothing to suggest what teachers must know and teach in grades K-6, 7-8 or 9-12.

Many exhortations appear: teachers are to help students to "understand chronological frameworks;" they are to recognize that "interpretations of history may change as new evidence is discovered" and that "history is dynamic and composed of key turning points." Students are also expected to "evaluate the influence of context upon historical understanding." Even more important, the framework project asserts, "Content no longer refers primarily to facts and the skills of writing." A closer look at the Alaska content standards reveals that content includes: "diverse ways of knowing and validating ideas; ways of developing multiple perspectives; [and] . . . "metacognitive abilities." This trendy multicultural, multiple intelligences rhetoric actually obscures the absence of real content—the most indispensable ingredient for reaching the "clear and challenging target" mentioned earlier as the #1 goal for Alaska teachers and students.

Similarly, the Government and Citizenship Content Standards are completely divorced from historical chronology and context. Students will learn something about the fundamental ideas and organization of American government, but the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights are the only historical benchmarks mentioned in the entire government and citizenship section of the standards (with the exception of some events in Alaskan history).

The history standards conclude that students who meet the content standard should "understand that the student is important in history." It might be even more relevant if students understood that George Washington, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, Clara Barton, Theodore Roosevelt, Susan B. Anthony, and many others are important in history, too—maybe even more important than the student. The Alaska Content Standards do not even begin to provide comprehensive historical content or sequential historical coherence. As a content framework, they provide guidance for teachers to the same extent that Horace Greeley's "Go West, young man," provided pioneers with a roadmap to California.

ARIZONA

(Assessment based on Arizona Standards: Social Studies Standards, 2000, Arizona Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Arizona

Comprehensive Historical Content: 7

Sequential Development: 10

Balance: 10

A

Total Score: 27 (90 percent)

The Arizona Social Studies Standards begin by affirming that the survival and progress of American democracy depend on understanding the founding principles in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and *The Federalist Papers*. The standards acknowledge the rich contributions of many people of diverse backgrounds, but stress "our shared heritage" and the undeniable historical fact that "most United States institutions and ideals trace their origins through Europe." As a result, the study of Western civilization is central to the standards, but students must also learn about the important contributions of other civilizations. Finally, the document asserts that students must grasp that people in the past "have grappled with the fundamental problems of truth, justice, and personal responsibility," that "ideas have real consequences" and that history is shaped "both by ideas and the actions of individuals." This rationale was written more than a year before September 11, 2001.

Our expectations are raised by this eloquent introduction, and we are not disappointed. History instruction in Arizona begins in kindergarten with a basic introduction to the concept of chronology—teaching children that history is the story of people in the past by examining family histories and the individuals and events honored in national holidays. By grades 1-3, students learn to use artifacts and photographs to understand that life in the past was both similar to and very different from their own experience. These materials are also used to introduce the "symbols, customs, and oral traditions of an Indian community of Arizona." Finally, students study individuals who "secured our freedom"—Washington, Franklin, and Jefferson—as well as people who "fought for the rights and freedoms of others," such as Chief Joseph, Chief Manuelito, Harriet Tubman, Lincoln, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

By grade 4 students are expected to differentiate between secondary and primary sources and to "distinguish fact from fiction in historical novels and movies." The historical content focuses on Arizona: the legacy of prehistoric Indians, Spanish and Mexican colonization, statehood, the Indian wars, and the cultural contributions of Hispanics and newcomers from other parts of the U.S.

Once this solid foundation in historical thinking and content has been established, fifth-grade students study American history from Discovery through the Revolution (not the Constitution, as claimed in the standards). The substance is rich and well organized, covering the economic, religious, etc., motives for colonization, the importance of the Mayflower Compact, the contribution of religious ideas to the shaping of American values, the differences among the three colonial regions, interactions between American Indians and Europeans, the Middle Passage and origins of slavery ("including the slave trade in Africa"), and the evolution of representative government and democratic institutions. The content on the American Revolution, however, is somewhat thin and does not explicitly connect the Revolutionary era to the earlier growth of indigenous American "democratic practices."

Grades 6-8 begin with further study of the basic tools of historical research and then move on to world history through the Age of Exploration before returning (apparently in eighth grade) to U.S. and Arizona history—this time from the Revolution through Reconstruction. The material on the Revolution is more focused than in grade 5, although once again there is no explicit connection of Revolutionary ideas and principles to the earlier evolution of colonial self-rule. Alexander Hamilton's ideas and program are covered, but, surprisingly, Jefferson is not discussed as his principal ideological opponent and as the key to the emergence of political parties. Similarly, the content plan

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skips from the development of parties to Jacksonian democracy—never mentioning Jefferson's "revolution of 1800." Also, utopianism, temperance, public schools, and women's education, etc., are missing from the social reform movements of the Jackson era (students would be fascinated, for example, by the story of Sylvester Graham and the fact that dietary reforms and other urges to individual and collective improvement are a recurring part of the American story). Also, the material on the coming of the Civil War does not include the rise of the Know Nothings or explain the "anti-slavery" viewpoint (as opposed to that of "abolitionism") in the 1850s or mention the establishment of the Republican Party in 1854.

Grades 9-12 again reinforce historical research skills and take on world history from the Enlightenment to the modern era before returning to U.S. history, beginning with the Industrial Revolution. Each section has some content problems. Missing material includes: the New South and the rise of legal racial segregation; local and state progressivism; Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom and Theodore Roosevelt's New Nationalism; the racist underside of Populism and progressivism; Herbert Hoover's efforts to combat the Great Depression; and the emergence of Franklin Roosevelt's "Democratic coalition." Indeed, the principal flaw in Arizona's U.S. history standards is the lack of a consistent thread of political history. On the other hand, the cumulative study of historical methodology is first-rate.

It would be unfair and counterproductive to fault the Arizona standards for omissions without emphasizing that, taken as a whole, the material is generally strong in historical content, outstanding in sequential development from kindergarten to the twelfth grade, and notable for telling the American story without a tendentious political bias. In the context of Arizona's strong commitment to decentralized schooling, the state's children are fortunate to have such well-articulated standards on which individual schools may rely.

ARKANSAS

(Assessment based on Arkansas Social Studies Curriculum Frameworks, 2000, Arkansas Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Arkansas

Comprehensive Historical Content: 0

Sequential Development: 0

Balance: 2(NA)

F

Total Score: 2 (7 percent)

The Arkansas Social Studies Curriculum Frameworks are designed to provide "a *broad conceptual* framework [emphasis in original] which teachers can use to organize integrated social studies units for the lower grades or discipline-based curriculum in the higher grades . . . Teachers may seek greater specificity in subject content of the standards . . . but the Arkansas social studies standards were intended to be broad and more general than specific so that teachers could easily fit their respective content into the overall strands and concepts."

A hard look at the Arkansas Framework immediately reveals that history is missing entirely in grades K-4, and a defined and coherent core of historical content is missing entirely in grades 5-8 and 9-12—hardly an auspicious beginning. The framework adopts the jargon of the National Council for Social Studies 1994 *Expectations for Excellence*—defining social studies as "the integrated study of the social sciences" and as a "coordinated, systematic study" of academic disciplines. "In primary school classrooms [social studies] . . . may be constructed around a theme such as 'Living and Working Together in Families and Communities: Now and Long Ago,' incorporating knowledge and skills from many academic disciplines. At the middle and high school levels, social studies is often subject-based such as a United States history course." The Arkansas Framework defines history itself, borrowing from the National Center for History in the Schools, as an inquiry "'into families, communities, states, nations,

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and various peoples of the world'" that engages students "'in the lives, aspirations, accomplishments, and failures of real people, in all aspects of their lives.'"

The reality, of course, is that this kind of "study" engages no one. Instead it has likely contributed to souring generations of young people on history and has helped "prepare" social studies teachers—many of whom never studied history in college—to teach history badly when they are obliged to teach it at all. The Arkansas Framework drains the substance, chronology, and life out of U.S. history by reducing it to boring and a-historical "strands" such as "Time, Continuity, and Change," "People, Places, and Environments," "Production, Distribution, and Consumption," "Power, Authority, and Governance," and "Social Science Processes and Skills." The Arkansas Standards for grades K-4 do not specify any history at all but still expect students to "analyze stories of important Americans and their contributions to our society." The standards for grades 5-8 do not specifically require the study of a single historical event (although they do mention the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights) but still expect students to "explain the cause and effect of events throughout history." The standards for grades 9-12 are also historically empty, but students are still expected "to compare and contrast divergent historical perspectives." Skills, in short, have been completely divorced from a comprehensive and cumulative core of essential knowledge in U.S. history.

Historical specificity, the standards explain, was rejected so that individual teachers can "fit their respective content" into the Framework. Yet, this approach does a profound disservice to serious Arkansas history teachers and all Arkansas students and, measured by the criteria cited above, is simply not up to the task of substantive history education. The Arkansas standards are the academic equivalent of a diet of only snack foods: light, airy, and full of empty calories. In the name of protecting "democracy" for teachers, it virtually guarantees incoherence for students.

CALIFORNIA

(Assessment based on History-Social Science Framework for California Public Schools, 1997; History-Social Science Content Standards for California Public Schools, 2000, California Department of Education and California State Board of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

California

Comprehensive Historical Content: **8**

Sequential Development: **10**

Balance: **9**

A

Total Score: **27 (90 percent)**

The populous and diverse state of California has been in the forefront of the history standards movement for more than 15 years. This continuing effort has brought together teachers, history professors, curriculum coordinators, and social studies specialists, and the results have received consistently high ratings in previous national surveys and analyses of state history standards. These accolades turn out to be generally well-deserved.

Although the explicit study of American history does not begin until fifth grade, the children of California are actually exposed to historical thinking from the earliest grades. In kindergarten, for example, the History-Social Science Content Standards introduce students to historical holidays and famous Americans before they study "how people lived in earlier times and how their lives would be different today (e.g. getting water from a well, growing food, making clothing, having fun, forming organizations, living by rules and laws)." By first grade, students become acquainted with "American symbols, landmarks, and essential documents" and explore "the structure of schools and communities in the past" as well as changes in transportation and patterns of work. Children learn by second grade to differentiate between "things that happened long ago and things that happened yesterday" and to think about how "the importance of individual action and character" in the past continues to affect people's lives to this day.

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In the third and fourth grades, in addition to studying the constitutions of California and United States, students are introduced to the story of American Indians in California and to the state's history from the earliest explorations to the modern era. By the time U.S. history formally begins in grade five, students have been offered a solid grounding, particularly in social history and, most important, have likely developed the rudiments of historical perspective.

The fifth grade Content Standards in U.S. history to 1850 cover pre-Columbian history, explorers and explorations, "the cooperation and conflict that existed among the American Indians and between the Indian nations and the new settlers" (explicitly including "internecine Indian conflicts" over land); the political, religious, social, and economic development of colonial society (including the emergence of "political self-government and a free-market economic system"); the causes and consequences of the American Revolution (including the precedents established in state constitutions and their impact on the Philadelphia convention of 1787); and westward expansion to 1850.

Political history, however, is largely glossed over in the Content Standards, just as it was in the earlier History-Social Science Framework (the narrative content guide and outline adopted in 1987 and updated in 1997). Examples of missing political history include: the political consequences, in Britain and America, of the French defeat in Canada in 1763, the emergence of American political parties in the 1790s, the expansion of the franchise by the 1830s, the bitter contests between Federalists and Democratic-Republicans, and, later, between Whigs and Democrats.

American history resumes in the eighth grade—starting with what the Framework calls "Connecting with Past Learning's," which recapitulates the Revolution through the Constitution (which means, unfortunately, that colonial history is not reinforced at the eighth-grade level) and continuing from the late eighteenth century through the late nineteenth century. The origins of the party system in the 1790s are included this time around, but there is still no coherent or consistent treatment of political history: the "Revolution of 1800" is absent, Henry Clay's "American System" is mentioned but Clay is never identified as the leader of the Whigs, and "Jacksonian democracy" is introduced entirely without political context. Likewise, the treatment of the coming of the Civil War does not mention the political struggles that led to dissolution of the Whigs and formation of the Republican Party and never makes the key distinction between "abolitionist" and "anti-slavery" viewpoints in the 1850s. The section on Reconstruction in the Content Standards never mentions the existence of radical Republicans or their clash with Andrew Johnson over readmission of the South to the Union (the latter *was* included in California's earlier Framework), or the disputed 1876 election and its critical implications for decades of racial policies (especially in the South).

United States history continues in eleventh grade—again by "Connecting with Past Learnings," which reviews the Revolution and the Constitution (studied in fifth and eighth grades) and continues through the Industrial Revolution. The larger issues associated with industrialization, immigration, and urbanization in the last third of the nineteenth century are generally covered, but again there is no political spine holding together the material on Social Darwinism, Populism, Progressivism, or the emergence of the U.S. as a world power. The Content Standards for the modern era are, in fact, somewhat more elusive and insubstantial than those for the pre-Civil War period. There is no mention, for example, of the defining political struggle of 1912 among Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft, and Debs. The Framework lumps Herbert Hoover with Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge as exemplars of "Normalcy," failing to mention that Hoover's efforts to use the federal government to combat economic depression were unprecedented in American history and unequalled until FDR's New Deal. And, on the World War II home front, the Framework directs that the internment of Japanese-Americans "should be analyzed as a violation of their human rights"; true enough, but students should also evaluate this action in the context of the crimes against human rights by Hitler's Germany, Hirohito's Japan, and Stalin's Soviet Union in the same time period.

The California Content Standards and Framework make a clear commitment to content over amorphous skills, to solid history rather than social studies generalizations, and to cumulative development of knowledge

over jargon about "strands" and "concepts." They are well-written and virtually free of preaching or manipulation. California may have too much content for any one teacher to cover in any given year, but that material allows teachers to make choices within a generally comprehensive selection of substantive history. California's standards should have a salutary, directive effect on classroom teaching. Given the state's influence with textbook publishers, we can also hope for a salutary impact in that arena, as well.

COLORADO

(Assessment based on Colorado Model Content Standards for History, 1995; Suggested Grade Level Expectations for History, 2001, Colorado Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Colorado

Comprehensive Historical Content: 6

Sequential Development: 5

Balance: 5

D

Total Score: 16 (53 percent)

The Colorado history standards ask the right question: "Why study history?" "Without history," they contend, "a society shares no common memory of where it has been, of what its core values are." The document also draws on Paul Gagnon's tour de force argument for history in the schools, *Historical Literacy: The Case for History in American Education*, written for the Bradley Commission on History in the Schools (1989). A broad and deep understanding of history will presumably allow students to "take their place as stewards of the principles of a democratic society."

The Colorado "Model Content Standards" outline "the areas of content to be studied, that is, *what students need to know*" [italics added]. The document identifies content standards, most of which actually represent skills rather than substantive knowledge, requiring students to understand:

1) "the chronological organization of history" and that "chronological thinking is at the very heart of historical reasoning."

2) "how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry" to establish "cause-and-effect relationships" and evaluate historical arguments.

3) that "societies are diverse and have changed over time." (Are ALL societies diverse?—for example, Japan?)

4) the importance of "science, technology and economic activity" throughout history.

5) "political institutions and theories that have developed and changed over time."

6) that "religious and philosophical ideas have been powerful forces throughout history."

Because the Colorado standards fail to distinguish between key skills of historical inquiry and actual historical content, this ambitious beginning turns out to be misdirected. By indicating a commitment to these six skill goals, the state hints at a concern for strong content knowledge but, with the exception of simply listing general eras in American history, taken directly from Charlotte Crabtree, et. al., *Lessons from History: Essential Understandings and Historical Perspectives Students Should Acquire*, (1992), the Colorado Content Standards fail to follow through on specifics. Many of the content topics are so vague and encompass such long periods of time that it is impossible to determine what they will include (or leave out). Students in grades 5-8, for example, are expected to explain "patterns and identifying themes in related events over time." High school students are asked to use "both chronological order and duration of events to detect and analyze patterns of historical continuity and change" and to draw on "historical information to interpret and evaluate decisions or policies regarding contemporary issues."

The "Colorado Suggested Grade Level Expectations" raise the bar somewhat by specifying that grade 5 students should "demonstrate a chronological understanding" of the colonial era, including "characteristics of the English colonies in North America, differences among Spanish, French and English colonies; the interaction of

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Native American, black, and colonial cultures; the planting and nurturing of new colonies." Students are also expected to demonstrate knowledge of the causes and consequences of the American Revolution.

By eighth grade, students are expected to develop a grasp of the period from 1815 to 1850, including "geographic and demographic expansion; market expansion; and early industrialization (Industrial Revolution, the plantation system, growth of cities, the immigrants and their experience)," as well as the Louisiana Purchase, Indian policy, Manifest Destiny, the Mexican War, "interactions of white and black Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Mexicans, and the social, economic, and political impact of the West on the growing nation." These middle school expectations are reasonably specific and promising. But they hardly measure up to the assertion by a Colorado social studies team at a National Council for History Education conference in 2000 that the "middle school level" social studies standards "focus heavily on specific content and declarative knowledge."

In addition, the content goals seem at times to reflect an aversion to making basic historical judgments. K-4 students are expected to grasp "the history, interactions, and contributions of various peoples and cultures" to *the history of Colorado ("for example, African-Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans")*. [italics in original] This listing would make more sense historically if these groups were arranged either by their chronological appearance in Colorado or by the importance of their contributions to Colorado history. A virtually identically worded content goal requires grade 9-12 students to understand the contributions of various peoples and cultures to the United States, and again the same five groups appear in alphabetical, historically neutral order. When grade 7 students, however, are asked to "describe the history, interactions, and contributions of various peoples who make up major culture regions of the world" the choices are not presented alphabetically and Europe brings up the rear:"(e.g., Africa, India, China, Japan, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe)."

Similarly, K-4 students are expected to identify "historical figures from diverse backgrounds in the United States who have advanced the rights of individuals and promoted the common good." Wouldn't it be more useful for students to identify these individuals by *first* assessing the *historical importance* of their contributions? Finally, in explaining Standard 5 (cited above), students are told, "All societies endeavor to preserve law and security." How does such a banal and antiseptic view of history explain, for example, the history of fascism and communism in the twentieth century?

The Colorado Suggested Grade Level Expectations, added in 2001, are somewhat more specific in substance and content. The contours of the historical eras listed earlier are filled in a bit, but still only in outline form, and it is still difficult to determine just what students must learn. The Colorado standards and grade level expectations need more work on content, sequential development, and balance. Their unevenness seriously limits their usefulness for teachers and students of U.S. history.

CONNECTICUT

(Assessment based on Connecticut Social Studies Curriculum Framework, 1998, Connecticut State Department of Education, Division of Teaching and Learning)

STATE REPORT CARD

Connecticut

Comprehensive Historical Content: 5

Sequential Development: 5

Balance: 5

D

Total Score: 15 (50 percent)

The introduction to the Connecticut Framework K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards explains that these curriculum frameworks "are not a state mandate, but are intended to provide . . . a framework for thinking about the knowledge, skills, and understandings that students should have. They are not intended to be grade-by-grade objectives that prescribe a curriculum. Local districts are responsible for developing curriculums that define what students learn and what teachers teach at specific grade levels." The Framework "was developed by a content

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advisory committee composed of educators, parents, community members and students."

This language leaves at least two critical questions unanswered. First, does the goal of "thinking about the knowledge" students should have also encompass trying to specifically *identify* that knowledge? Second, did the educators on the content advisory committees include historians and scholars with expert knowledge of U.S. history? This lengthy and cumbersome document gives little indication that either of those questions may be answered in the affirmative. Nor does the Framework explain why providing a solid core of sequential content in U.S. history would in any way conflict with local choice and control in the Connecticut school system.

The document, despite soaring rhetoric, seems confined within the most conventional social studies thinking. For example, students will "demonstrate knowledge of the structure of United States and world history to understand life and events in the past and *how they relate to one's own life experience*" [italics added]. However, the framework provides no specific content to suggest, for example, how students would relate seventeenth-century indentured servitude or slavery to their own life experience. The framework divides social studies into fifteen "content standards" (Historical Thinking, Local, United States and World History, Historical Themes, Applying History, United States Constitution and Government, Rights and Responsibilities of Citizens, Political Systems, International Relations, Places and Regions, Physical Systems, Human Systems, Human and Environmental Interaction, Limited Resources, Economic Systems, and Economic Independence) but it is nonetheless essentially anonymous. Students will somehow "demonstrate an in-depth understanding of major events and trends in United States history" despite the fact that the framework does not mention key historical figures and does not even attempt to establish grade-specific objectives in American history.

In fact, the Framework is filled with marching orders and exhortations but little historical content or sequentially developed learning. The outline asserts that students will "demonstrate," "analyze," "apply," "describe," "develop," "explain," "use," "interpret," "recognize," "examine," "gather," "formulate," "identify," "initiate" and be active learners in proving their grasp of complex historical thinking, themes, and knowledge. But, in United States history, with the exception of an extremely broad listing of eras from "first peoples" through the "contemporary United States," one searches through the Framework without ever finding out exactly what U.S. history teachers should know or what students are actually expected to learn. The local responsibility for curriculum in Connecticut is a fact of life, but that hardly excuses the failure of the framework to identify a specific common core of essential learning in American history.

The Framework, we are told, will ensure that grade 9-12 students demonstrate "an in-depth understanding of major events and trends" in American, world, and local history "from all historical periods and from all the regions of the world." The goal itself is unrealistically broad and sweeping particularly because the document fails to adequately identify specific content or create a practical road map for cumulatively teaching and reinforcing American history. References to U.S. history, characterized as examples of "in-depth" understanding, are often extremely general—"e.g. the American Revolution, the Civil War, industrialization, the Great Depression, the Cold War." "Content standards" such as "Historical Thinking" and "Applying History" are really process skills that would be much more useful if they were developed in tandem with explicit historical substance.

These standards only begin to identify what U.S. history should actually be taught by Connecticut teachers and, of equal importance, what should be learned by Connecticut students. It is unfortunate that a state that devotes so many resources to public education gives so little direction to defining its U.S. history curriculum.

DELAWARE

(Assessment based on Social Studies Standards, End of Grade Cluster Benchmarks, Performance Indicators, Grades K-5, 6-8, 9-12, 2001, Delaware Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Delaware

Comprehensive Historical Content: **8**

Sequential Development: **10**

Balance: **7**

B

Total Score: **25 (83 percent)**

The Delaware Social Studies Standards are organized around "clusters of expectations" for each of the subject areas covered (government and politics, citizenship, economics, geography, and history) from kindergarten through high school. History students entering grade 11, for example, will be expected to learn how to:

1) "employ chronological concepts in analyzing historical phenomena" so that by the end of the eleventh grade they can "analyze historical materials to trace the development of an idea over a prolonged period of time in order to explain patterns of historical continuity and change."

2) "gather, examine, and analyze historical data" and, by the end of the year, be able to "develop and implement effective research strategies" and "analyze primary and secondary sources in order to differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations."

3) "interpret historical data" so that, by the end of the eleventh grade, they can "compare competing historical narratives" and distinguish "use and choice of sources, perspective, beliefs, and points of view."

4) "develop historical knowledge of major events" in U.S. history and, by the end of the year, be able to understand the relationship of American history to both Delaware and world history.

Setting a standard for measuring the knowledge *actually acquired* during the eleventh grade, "which will serve as the basis for social studies assessment items in the Delaware Student Testing Program," suggests that the state has made a serious commitment to accountability—an appropriate objective for the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution. Delaware students actually begin the study of history in grade 3 (with Delaware history) and then cover U.S. history in grades 4-5. The entire span is then recapitulated in grades 8 and 11. The eighth grade U.S. history content performance indicator sets up a rather soft and amorphous goal: "identify and describe major people and events in American history to 1877 and assess their significance to the nation's development." But the historical topics and related subtopics that follow are reasonably specific—indicating that students get a substantive introduction to U.S. history. In addition, the content topics are written objectively (if somewhat antiseptically) and without language that overtly prejudges the conclusions students should reach.

The topics are entirely predictable, reflecting, as one would expect, the dominant perspective in today's textbooks and curricula. The grade 6-8 topics begin with the current, omnipresent, and conventional wisdom about the origins of American history—"three worlds meet (beginnings to 1620)"—and then move through "colonization and settlement (1585-1763)," "Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820s)," "Expansion and Reform (1801-1861)," and "Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877)." The "Three Worlds Meet" paradigm highlights relations between "European settlers and enslaved Africans." The topics, however, never touch on how these Africans became *enslaved*. Likewise, the material on the development of slavery in the British North American colonies deals with the origins of the Atlantic Slave trade and the Middle Passage without a word about the role of African royal families and slave traders. This subject is far too important for students to study only part of the whole story.

Nor is there much in Delaware's topics to suggest or explain the growth of democratic institutions and values in colonial America—the other side of the coin of early American history. As a result, students will have a difficult time explaining the sudden rise of anti-British sentiment after 1763. There are many other important

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gaps in content: for example, the Articles of Confederation, the growth of political parties in the 1790s, and the significance of Jacksonian democracy.

Similarly, in the high school material on the impact of World War II on the American home front, students are expected to discuss the major military campaigns, the Tuskegee Airmen and the Women's Army Corps, women in war industries, civil rights and race riots, Japanese internment, and the atomic bomb. Conspicuously missing is any consideration of the transformation of the federal government and the national economy or rationing and censorship. Students should also learn about why the war has been termed the "good war," so that they can understand the positive factors that helped Americans to work together and make extraordinary sacrifices in an unprecedented and successful common effort to preserve democracy.

Delaware, nonetheless, has clearly made significant progress toward establishing "rigorous subject content," coherent sequential development, and meaningful and measurable standards and expectations in U.S. history for both teachers and students. Once the outline of historical content is tightened up, and assuming that curricular balance is maintained, Delaware's framework will serve as both a thoroughly reliable compass and a gyroscope for its U.S. history curriculum.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

(Assessment based on Standards for Teaching and Learning: Social Studies, Grades Pre-K to 12; District of Columbia Performance Descriptors, Grades 8 and 11; United States History, Grade 11, District of Columbia Public Schools, 2000)

STATE REPORT CARD

District of Columbia

Comprehensive Historical Content: 4

Sequential Development: 4

Balance: 4

F

Total Score: 12 (40 percent)

The District of Columbia standards for teaching and learning United States history must be teased out of a series of lengthy social studies documents. Historical study begins in grade 3 with the history of Washington, D.C., and moves on to U.S. history to 1800 in grade 5 ("from the earliest European explorations to colonization, the American Revolution, U.S. Constitution, parties and politics [coordinated with American literature, art and architecture where possible])." U.S. history resumes chronologically, from 1800 to 1900, in eighth grade. Finally, in grade 11, students complete this required sequence by studying the period from 1900 to the present. (Several history electives are also available in grades 11 and 12—including Advanced Placement U.S. History and African-American History).

This limited U.S. history sequence, which lacks any sequential development since no period is recapitulated at a more advanced level, is starved for specific historical content. History teaching and learning in the D.C. plan are confined in a virtual straitjacket of social studies jargon, making it extremely difficult to identify what teachers should teach and what students should learn. Several "History Benchmarks" are supposed to be tied to corresponding "Content Standards". For example:

- **"Chronology and Space in Human History."** "Students understand chronological order and spatial patterns of human experiences by placing the stories of people and events in the context of their own time and place."
- **"Social Diversity and Social Change."** "Students understand how the origins, evolution, and diversity of societies, social classes, and groups have been affected and changed by forces of geography, ideology, and economics."
- **"Cultural History: Tradition, Creativity, and Diversity."** "Students understand the different ways individuals have expressed experiences, beliefs, and aspirations in art, architecture, music, and literature."
- **"Political Ideas, Turning Points, and Institutions."** "Students understand the historical evolution of political ideas, ideologies, and institutions. . . . [and how] technological, economic, social, cultural, religious, and philosophical forces in history have shaped politics."

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Searching through the benchmarks does yield some specific historical references, for example, to the causes of the Revolution and the Civil War, the reasons for the separation of church and state in the U.S. Constitution, and the motives of American reformers from the Civil War through the Progressive era. But much of the historical direction is too broad and vague, such as "identify and describe patterns of change in American history from 1800 to the Civil War and Reconstruction." Sometimes the writing is also politically tendentious, inaccurate, or confusing, for example, "explain how institutions can be both tools of justice and discriminating towards various groups of people, especially groups distinguished by gender, race, sexual orientation, and class," or examine injustices such as "genocidal attacks on Native Americans, enslavement of African peoples, burning women at the stake." (Presumably this last point is a reference to the Salem witch trials. In fact, women were hanged, never burned at the stake. Men were also hanged and one was pressed to death between heavy stones.) Most of the specific historical content in the District of Columbia material is actually found in the grade 8 and 11 "Performance Descriptors," in which student performance is judged by four levels of achievement from "advanced" to "below basic."

A great deal of effort must have gone into preparing these elaborate documents, but much more work is required to provide D.C. students with comprehensive historical content, sequential historical development, and balanced perspective. A simple shift in emphasis—less social studies "skills" and more historical content—could likely be achieved by adding some historians to the current advisory committee of social studies professionals. Until that happens, D.C. students and teachers alike will almost certainly drift through their study of the American past weighed down by vague and pointless abstractions like "chronology and space in human history."

FLORIDA

(Assessment based on Florida Curriculum Framework: Social Studies, PreK-12 Sunshine State Standards and Instructional Practice, 1996; Grade Level Expectations from the Sunshine State Standards, 1999, Florida Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Florida

Comprehensive Historical Content: 5

Sequential Development: 5

Balance: 7

D

Total Score: 17 (57 percent)

The Florida Curriculum Framework makes clear that these social studies standards articulate "state-mandated academic standards" for raising expectations, accountability, and student achievement. But the Framework also explains that decisions about content remain in the hands of "local planners who recognize the diversity of their students' unique learning styles, backgrounds, attitudes, interests, aptitudes and needs." This potential contradiction aside, the Florida Framework asserts that the strands, standards, and benchmarks created within social studies represent the core of this curriculum and have been designed to "have a specific hierarchic structure. There are several levels of information, each more specific than the next." For example: subject area–social studies; strand–history; standard–general statement of expected learner achievement; benchmark–what a student should know after completing grades 3-5, 6-8, or 9-12. The social studies strand for history, "Time, Continuity, and Change," includes several standards keyed specifically to U.S. history: for example, students are expected to understand historical chronology and perspective as well as the history of Florida and the nation.

This somewhat unwieldy scheme could be workable, but it clearly needs to be backed up by a very specific and coherent core of historical knowledge that all Florida teachers are expected to know and teach and all

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Florida students are expected to learn—at specific grade levels. The Florida history benchmarks do contain a good deal of solid history: for example, asking students to support or refute "the right of the colonists to rebel against the English and start the American Revolution"; to describe key individuals from the Revolutionary era (such as Lord North, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson); to contrast the Articles of Confederation and a selected state constitution; to explain how an invention (such as the cotton gin) influenced American life; to analyze the basic provisions of the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments, or to discuss the social transformations of the 1920s and the 1930s.

The problem, however, is that finding these generally useful benchmarks requires navigating a swamp of more than fifty pages of "Sample Performance Descriptions" linked to the history strand ("Time, Continuity, and Change") that appear to be listed in virtually all grades, making it next to impossible to evaluate the grade level distribution of U.S. history. And, as is so often the case in American history education, there is little to suggest that students will be exposed to anything approaching a coherent account of the development of democratic institutions and values in the colonial period or the colorful story of American political parties since the 1790s. Slavery is mentioned in benchmarks on the Civil War, but none of the earlier topics include the origins of slavery in the seventeenth century or the development of the slave economy in the South after the Revolution—a subject at the heart of Florida history. The Grade Level Expectations provide some additional detail and substance, but major gaps and omissions remain—for example, the "Revolution of 1800," Jacksonian Democracy, and Populism and Progressivism.

These cumbersome documents, weighed down by jargon about "visioning" and "infusion," do not include a specific breakdown of exactly what U.S. history material will be included and in what sequence. It appears that U.S. history is covered in the fifth and eighth grades and again in high school (eleventh grade?), but the framework is extremely vague about identifying specific periods, issues, and personalities covered in particular grades, making it difficult to assess the comprehensiveness, sequential development, and coherence of this U.S. history curriculum.

Florida's best teachers and content specialists, working with some of the state's best historians, can surely get this history curriculum on track for their students, particularly by adding a grade-by-grade listing or a grade-range listing of the specific core content that should be taught at each grade level. But until Florida's guidelines are organized more clearly and made both more complete and more specific, there is little reason to believe that its students can actually reach them.

GEORGIA

(Assessment based on Georgia Learning Connections: Quality Core Curriculum—Social Studies, 1999, Georgia Department of Education) {Georgia is currently revising its standards.}

STATE REPORT CARD

Georgia

Comprehensive Historical Content: 7

Sequential Development: 9

Balance: 9

B

Total Score: 25 (83 percent)

The revision committee that produced the 1999 Georgia Quality Core Curriculum brought together PreK-12 social studies educators from around the state and focused on promoting what they defined as the three core elements of social studies: knowledge (what students should know), skills (what students should be able to do), and values (helping students become informed citizens). The committee was especially concerned about "refining content standards to clarify content and skills," "building on concepts" introduced in earlier grades, and "providing content standards that are clearly measurable."

The social studies history strand introduces U.S. (and some Georgia) history in fourth grade (from Exploration to the Civil War). The fifth-grade American history curriculum begins with the Civil War and Reconstruction and concludes with the Post-World War II period (through the civil rights movement). This

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commitment to providing a comprehensive overview of U.S. history in the early grades is admirable. Moreover, the topics for these two introductory years of U.S. history seem reasonably comprehensive. However, the proposed fourth- and fifth-grade lesson plans (available on the Georgia Quality Care Curriculum Web site) reveal an overemphasis on social history. The emergence of political parties in the 1790s, for example, is not covered in fourth grade. The fifth-grade standard on "how social, political, and economic reforms during the Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson presidencies affected Americans (e.g. women, children, American Indians, and African Americans)" does not include local, state, and national Progressive reforms or the dramatic 1912 presidential race among these three leaders (and Socialist Party candidate Eugene V. Debs). Website links are available on specific reforms, such as the Pure Food and Drug Act, but unless students have studied political history, they are unlikely to understand the context of these reforms or even that TR and Taft were Republicans and Wilson was a Democrat.

The eighth-grade "Georgia Studies" curriculum seamlessly integrates the state's history into the larger national story (especially in the colonial, Revolutionary, Civil War, and Jim Crow eras). This program of study seems balanced and inclusive, with one major exception: the content standards on the founding and development of Georgia do not include a unit on the importance of slavery in early Georgia history. Slavery, in fact, is not mentioned at all until a topic on "state's rights and slavery" in the antebellum period. Political history is still underrepresented, but several key topics are included (such as the emergence of political parties in the first decade of the new nation and the crucial story of one-party white rule in Georgia and the South after Reconstruction).

The high school segment of the Georgia U.S. history sequence skillfully recapitulates American history from colonization through the Cold War. The specific topics are generally inclusive and demanding—and political history finally gets something approaching equal billing. The material on the 1790s, for example, includes "the importance of Washington's and John Adams' administrations, cabinet appointments, federal judiciary completed, judicial review, Hamilton's financial system, first American party system, Whiskey Rebellion, Neutrality Proclamation, 'Farewell Address,' 'XYZ' Affair, and Virginia and Kentucky resolutions." A good college survey syllabus on the 1790s could hardly be more comprehensive.

Jefferson's "Revolution of 1800," however, is unaccountably left out, even though the election of 1824, the formation of the modern Democratic Party and the Whig Party, and the 1854 creation of the Republican Party (a major step toward the Civil War) are included. Again, the most baffling omission in the high school curriculum is the lack of a unit on the origins of slavery in colonial America (the North as well as the South—12 percent of the population of New York City were slaves in the mid-eighteenth century). In addition, slavery is never explicitly discussed as *a* cause, if not *the* cause, of the Civil War—even though every point in the topic on Sectionalism is directly related to slavery.

The Georgia Quality Core Curriculum is essentially as advertised. The content is generally comprehensive, the sequential development is strong, and the language is balanced. A revision of the Georgia social studies curriculum may be completed and released later this year. Georgia students and parents should hope that it will match or surpass the version currently in use.

HAWAII

(Assessment based on Hawaii Social Studies Content Standards, 1999, Department of Education, State of Hawaii)

STATE REPORT CARD

Hawaii

Comprehensive Historical Content: 3

Sequential Development: 3

Balance: 2(NA)

F

Total Score: 8 (27 percent)

The title page of the Hawaii Social Studies Content Standards, which identifies its source as the Office of Accountability in the Hawaii Department of Education,

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displays a mock campaign button emblazoned with two motivational slogans: "Raising Our Expectations" and "Living Up to Them." In addition, the Superintendent of Education affirms in the foreword, "Research on effective schools tells us that one of the most important elements in improving the results of education is being clear about standards, what it is that students are expected to learn." In that spirit, he explains, Hawaii's social studies standards provide clear statements about what should be taught and learned in order to answer a key question: "What should students know, be able to do, and care about?" Finally, the reader is assured that "These standards represent the essence of each discipline . . . ." Despite such grandiose claims, however, the actual results are quite disappointing.

The standards reflect the outlook of *Meeting the Challenge: A Framework for Social Studies Restructuring*, published in 1992 by the National Council for the Social Studies:

1) "Change, Continuity, Causality" requires students to "employ chronology" to understand change in history.

2) "Historical Empathy" helps students to "judge the past on its own terms" in order to "use that knowledge to understand present-day issues."

3) "Historical Inquiry" teaches students to use "the tools and methods of historians to transform learning from memorizing historical data to 'doing history.'"

4) "Historical Perspectives and Interpretations" allows students to explain the past with "multiple interpretations" rather than "historical linearity or inevitability."

These somewhat amorphous goals could conceivably be implemented in a United States history curriculum rich in content and systematically developed from the early grades through high school. However, the Hawaii Social Studies Content Standards also assert, "This framework is *not* a checklist of subjects that must be taught"; "The study of history should not rest solely on the knowledge of facts, dates and places"; and "Knowledge alone will not solve the problems of the 21st Century."

Hawaii's students, parents, teachers, and taxpayers would be better served if the framework *did* include "a checklist of subjects that must be taught." No responsible historian would ever claim that historical study should "rest solely on the knowledge of facts, dates, and places." Historical understanding also requires comparison and contrast, synthesis, and careful analysis. Nor would any real historian claim that "'Knowledge alone [even historical knowledge] . . . will solve the problems of the 21st Century." Studying history is not about predicting the future or solving today's or tomorrow's problems. It *is* about trying to understand the past on its own terms.

The Hawaii standards regrettably reflect this ambivalent and almost anti-intellectual approach to historical knowledge; they are virtually without substance in U.S. history. They include highly general topic outlines for the grade 6-8 course from colonization through Reconstruction (e.g., "Sectionalism: North, South, and West" and "Civil War: causes, course of the war"), and in the grade 9-12 course on the U.S. since Reconstruction (e.g., "Populist and Progressive Movements" and "World War II: American entry, course of war in Europe and Pacific"). The Hawaii Performance Standards (or Performance Indicators) also repeat the same four general NCSS standards for studying history without requiring or even suggesting any specific sequence of historical content.

"Doing history" (see number 3 above) means that "Rather than memorizing names and dates from history texts, students research historical questions, analyze their findings, and present them in a form appropriate to class assignments (written, oral, visual, or dramatics)." This statement sets up a false dichotomy that suggests that, through some indiscernible and undescribed learning process, students will somehow be able to do substantive research in American history and "analyze cause-and-effect and multiple causation of change" without having demonstrated mastery of a solid core of historical knowledge.

The parents and students of Hawaii deserve real standards, based on real content and historical thinking skills in U.S. history. The Hawaii Department of Education must take its own slogans seriously by raising expectations, defining them more fully, living up to

them, and actually making its Office of Accountability accountable for real results. Until it does so, Hawaii's standards will be, to borrow a phrase from the British historian Thomas Macaulay, "All sail and no anchor."

IDAHO

(Assessment based on Idaho Suggested Social Studies Scope and Sequence, no date; Idaho Social Studies Achievement Standards, 2000; Integrated Instructional Guide—Grade 5: Introduction to American History; Course of Study: U.S. History 1; Course of Study: U.S. History 2, 2002, Idaho Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Idaho

Comprehensive Historical Content: 6

Sequential Development: 6

Balance: 4

D

Total Score: 16 (53 percent)

The Idaho social studies sequence in United States history begins in fifth grade (after an introduction to Idaho history in fourth). The course of study, "Introduction to American History," is organized around four "Instructional Themes":

1) "Where Are We?"—concentrating on the geographical environment of the U.S.

2) "Who Are We?"—stressing exploration and expansion, particularly the impact of Native American cultures on the U.S. and the impact of European exploration on those cultures.

3) "Why Are We?"—understanding the "inter-relationships of conflict, economics, and government in shaping the country."

4) "How Did We Get Here?"—recognizing "the interrelationships of expansion, cultural conflicts, the impact of civil war, and technological advances that shaped the country."

The Idaho Suggested Social Studies Scope and Sequence, in a similar vein, cites several "Unifying Motifs" from a 1991 NCSS report on social studies in middle school. These motifs include: concern with self: development of self-esteem and a strong sense of identity; concern for right and wrong (fueled by lapses in ethical behavior in business and government); development of group and other-centeredness (including "concern for the oppressed and unfortunate"); and concern for the world (especially "respect for cultural diversity"). These "Unifying Motifs" sound more like an invitation to teach political correctness and presentism rather than genuine history.

Some of the fifth-grade social studies content achievement standards in U.S. history for theme two ("Who Are We?") call for studying Native American cultures, the religious, political, and economic motives of "voluntary" European immigrants (see discussion below), influential cultural groups within the diverse American culture, and the history of the U.S. slave trade. These topics are clearly important, but students should also learn about political and religious pluralism and especially about the democratic institutions and values that took root in the early colonies. In addition, the phrase "the slave trade in the United States" is unclear: does it refer to the internal domestic slave trade or the importation of slaves from Africa (the latter was banned in 1808)?

By the time fifth grade students get to Theme Three ("Why Are We?") they are expected to explain the events and reasons the colonists went to war with England. But there is nothing in the guide to suggest that this history has been adequately covered, except for an economics standard that states, "Know the economic policies of England that contributed to the revolt in the North American colonies." (It is curious that the American Revolution is characterized as "the revolt in the North American colonies.") For Instructional Theme Four ("How Did We Get Here?"), students are expected to "understand the meaning and significance of the Articles of Confederation" and to "identify the important concepts in the United States Constitution" before moving on to Manifest Destiny and westward expansion—hardly a sufficient foundation for understanding the establishment of the federal system in 1789. Indeed, political history is all but absent in these standards, and

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not a single important American is explicitly named or discussed. This fifth grade introduction to U.S. history is essentially a hodgepodge of decontextualized, politically tendentious, and selective social history.

By tenth grade, however, there is substantial improvement in the scope, organization, and content of Idaho's U.S. history sequence (from colonization through Reconstruction). The content standards for the colonization period, for example, are generally balanced and thorough—encompassing religious, political, social, and economic history. Again, though, no specific names are mentioned, even when students are asked to "Provide and evaluate examples of social, and political leadership in early American history." The standards also manipulate language and distort history by broadly contrasting "voluntary immigrants" (from Europe) and "involuntary immigrants" ("indentured servants and enslaved Africans"). In fact, most "unfree" indentured servants came to the colonies voluntarily and upon the completion of their contractual obligations (usually seven years) provided the developing economy with a regular and dynamic infusion of newly free individuals. The notion of "voluntary" European immigrants is imprecise at best. Many immigrants, such as criminals and people fleeing famines, wars, and religious persecution, were shipped over by various European governments through the centuries. Also, the term "enslaved Africans" neatly evades the question of how these Africans were first enslaved *before* they came to America.

This peculiar variety of "anonymous" history continues in the eleventh-grade U.S. history survey (since Reconstruction). The objectives and content standards do not mention any specific names, even in broad discussions of Populism, the Spanish-American War, Progressivism, or the causes of World War I. Surnames finally do appear when students are asked to "compare the political leadership of Hoover and Roosevelt in their handling of the Great Depression."

The Idaho Social Studies Sequence is peculiarly uneven in depth and quality. For example, the sections on early American history are more detailed and specific than the corresponding material on twentieth-century U.S. history. There is also a pressing need for greater precision in the specification of key historical figures and events to be studied. These lengthy social studies-based documents nonetheless suggest an increased awareness of the need for content-rich U.S. history. Idaho could substantially improve its framework by making history—especially rich and nuanced political history—an important part of its program beginning in the earliest grades. It remains to be seen whether this goal can be achieved within the confines of the social studies approach to history education.

ILLINOIS

(Assessment based on Illinois Learning Standards: Social Science; Illinois Social Science Performance Descriptors; Teachers Guide to Classroom Assessments from the Illinois Learning Standards; Illinois Core Standards for all Social Science Teachers, 2000, Illinois State Board of Education) (Illinois is currently revising its standards.)

STATE REPORT CARD

Illinois

Comprehensive Historical Content: 1

Sequential Development: 1

Balance: 2(NA)

F

Total Score: 4 (13 percent)

The Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science define social science as "a highly integrated set of disciplines" which encompasses the study of political systems, economics, history, geography, and social systems, and then cite George Santayana's oft-quoted remark about the dangers of historical ignorance: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." In that spirit, the document asserts that the social science learning standards for history will help students "deepen their understanding of basic knowledge" and promote civic competence by identifying "what Illinois citizens generally agree upon as constituting a core of student learning." Readers are also assured, "The Illinois Learning Standards are content standards that describe "*what*" [emphasis in original] students should know and be able to do in grades K-12."

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However, Illinois parents searching through these standards will find it impossible to verify any of these claims, particularly for the teaching of United States history. The learning standards do not include any kind of chronological structure or sequence for teaching American history from the early grades through high school. The specific standards, which demand that students "Apply the skills of historical analysis and interpretation" and "Understand the development of significant political events," jump chaotically from colonial to modern America at each required level of study (early elementary, late elementary, middle/junior high school, early high school, and late high school). There is no evidence of a sequentially coherent development of subject matter in U.S. history.

The topics are absurdly broad and sweeping at every one of these five grade spans and are completely disconnected from the actual historical skills students can reasonably be expected to have at any particular grade level or age. Late elementary students, for example, are expected to "Identify major political events and leaders within the United States historical eras" from the adoption of the Constitution to the wars of the twentieth century. Middle school students are asked to "Describe the ways in which the United States developed as a world political power," but no time span is mentioned. Early high school students are supposed to "Identify political ideas that have dominated United States historical eras (e.g., Federalist, Jacksonian, Progressivist [*sic*], New Deal, New Conservative [*sic*])." Finally, by late high school, students are presumably equipped to "Analyze how United States political history has been influenced by the nation's economic, social, and environmental history"—apparently from the early colonial era to the global markets of the twenty-first century.

Some of these topics would be challenging to history doctoral students, but there is nothing in the Illinois Learning Standards to suggest when or how this material would actually be taught. Similarly, there is nothing to indicate that any choices have been made toward identifying the "core of student learning" cited above. All topics appear to be of equal importance, nothing is defined as essential, and everything is presented in an ahistorical jumble. Except for a list of the most general American "historical eras" (such as "The American Revolution and early national period to 1820s" and "The emergence of the United States as a world power from 1890 to 1920"), the Illinois Learning Standards for United States history have no measurable standards, no coherent history, no chronology, and no discernable potential to help students learn anything of value about their nation's past.

Parents will not find anything more useful in the Illinois Social Science Performance Descriptors—supposedly designed to measure "*how well* [emphasis in original] students should perform to meet the standards." Students (at what grade level?) are expected to "Identify turning points in United States political history"—again presumably from colonial beginnings through the contested presidential election of 2000. In fact, it is the task of teachers to identify historical turning points and to help students differentiate between events of transient and enduring significance. The Illinois Core Standards declare, "The competent social science teacher understands major political developments and compares patterns of continuity and change in the United States and the State of Illinois." Students, in turn, are supposed to "Compare/contrast the causes and effects of significant political events in a period of United States history"—a task vague, general, and unfocused enough to convince them that studying history is pointless, irrelevant, and dull. Oddly enough, the Illinois standards and performance descriptors include some U.S. political history, often ignored in many state standards, but virtually disregard critical issues in social history such as the origins and development of slavery in the seventeenth century.

Devoid of specific content, without a coherent chronological framework, and completely lacking in clear and sequential grade-level expectations, the Illinois standards have sacrificed historical narrative and drama—rarely even mentioning the names of flesh and blood figures in United States history. One such figure, the state's own Abraham Lincoln, said, "We cannot escape history." If classes in the "Land of Lincoln" are based on the current Illinois framework, many Illinois students will surely wish they could.

INDIANA

(Assessment based on United States History: Indiana's Academic Standards—Social Studies; Indiana's Academic Standards: Teacher's Edition—Social Studies, 2001, Indiana Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Indiana

Comprehensive Historical Content: **9**

Sequential Development: **10**

Balance: **10**

A

Total Score: **29 (97 percent)**

The Indiana United States History Standards begin with open letters to students and their parents. "This booklet of academic standards," students are told, "clearly spells out what you should know and be able to do in United States history." Parents are likewise informed, "These world-class standards outline what your student should know and be able to do in each subject, at each grade level. . . . We know that by setting specific goals, everyone wins. Teachers have clear targets, students know what's expected." Finally, the introduction urges parents to make reading a way of life for their children and to make clear that homework must be done: "*Remember: You are the most important influence on your child. Indiana's Academic Standards give you an important tool to ensure that your child gets the best education possible.*" [emphasis in original]

Indiana students begin their study of history in grade 4. The material on the history of Indiana starts with early Native American cultures and the arrival of Europeans and carries the story through statehood to the present. The section on the Civil War era, for example, asks students to "Explain the role of various individuals, groups, and movements in the social conflicts leading to the Civil War." As an example, the Standards cite "Levi and Catherine Coffin, The Underground Railroad, religious groups, the abolition and anti-slavery groups, the Liberia colonization movement." This reference clearly suggests that the crucial distinction between abolition and anti-slavery has been accurately explained—a remarkable beginning, particularly in the fourth grade.

United States history begins in the fifth grade, covering the period from the pre-Columbian era to 1800. The historical content is generally thorough and balanced, although there is only a general reference to the significant sectional differences that began to develop in the seventeenth century. On the other hand, the outline deals with "the causes and consequences of the establishment of slavery [and] . . . how slavery became an issue that began to divide the Northern and Southern colonies." The outline skips over the development of democratic institutions and values in the period before 1763, making it difficult for students later to understand the genesis of the Revolution. But the period from the Revolution to 1800, including the drafting of the state constitutions and the emergence of political parties in the 1790s, is admirably covered. Strangely, the Articles of Confederation are missing. The course concludes with an introduction to historical research and the distinction between primary and secondary sources.

Students return to U.S. history in eighth grade, covering the period from the Revolution through Reconstruction. The outline begins with a careful review of early U.S. history to the Revolution and the founding era, first covered in the fifth grade and this time including the Articles of Confederation. The specific topical outline is clear, well-written, comprehensive, and free of political posturing. Some areas are a bit thin, such as the social reform movement in the antebellum period (students are always fascinated by utopianism, such as Robert Dale Owen's experimental community in New Harmony, Indiana) and the story of Reconstruction. But teachers are not discouraged from adding this kind of material. Again, the course concludes with further study of historical method and interpretation.

Finally, the year-long high school course in U.S. history recapitulates the founding period (for the third time since the fifth grade, presumably facilitating a more sophisticated treatment each time), the era through Reconstruction (for the second time), and then takes American history up to the Clinton administration. The course outline clearly contains more material

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than could conceivably be covered in two semesters, but it provides teachers with an invaluable roadmap to what *should* be covered. Most important, the topics are not only detailed and inclusive, but the language is again dispassionate and balanced. In dealing, for example, with court decisions on immigration restriction and civil rights in the late nineteenth century, students are asked to "analyze and evaluate the majority and dissenting opinions." Likewise, even when dealing with the conflict between American Indians and western settlers, which encompasses some of the most egregious injustices in U.S. history, students are required to "explain various perspectives on federal government policy about Indians."

Even more remarkable, the section on the U.S. in World War II covers the mobilization of economic and military resources and explicitly contrasts "the civic and political values of the United States with those of Nazi Germany." But students are also asked to "Explain the constitutional significance" of landmark decisions in civil rights, particularly relating to the internment of Japanese-Americans, and to "analyze the economic and social changes in American life brought about by the United States' involvement in World War II, including the role and status of women and African Americans." In short, the wartime home front is presented in historical context. The course finishes up with another discussion of historical research and resources.

Indiana parents have been told that these "world-class standards outline what your student should know and be able to do in each subject, at each grade level." In United States history, this is one state in which the product matches the rhetoric. For comprehensiveness, sequential development, balance, and sensitivity to historical context, the Hoosier State stands at the head of the class.

IOWA

(no history or social studies standards)

KANSAS

(Assessment based on Kansas Curricular Standards (for History), 1999, Kansas State Board of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Kansas

Comprehensive Historical Content: 7

Sequential Development: 8

Balance: 10

B

Total Score: 25 (83 percent)

The Kansas Curricular Standards acknowledge that "history poses a unique challenge requiring teachers to make thoughtful and meaningful choices. In this document every attempt has been made to focus on enduring and essential concepts." Kansas standards in U.S. history, as a result, are "focused on specific eras at different grade levels." The focus is on the eighteenth century in elementary school, the nineteenth century in middle school, and the twentieth in high school. The standards attempt to be both comprehensive and achievable, claiming that "a rigorous but unrealistic set of standards is like having no standards at all."

The study of history begins for Kansas students in the second grade with a general introduction to early settlements in Kansas ("American Indians, plains pioneers, early English and Spanish settlements"). Kansas and U.S. history progress in tandem from fourth to eleventh grades, encompassing westward expansion before statehood, conflict between settlers and Native Americans, the role of Kansas in the coming of the Civil War (particularly the Kansas-Nebraska Act), the Exodusters, late nineteenth- to twentieth-century immigration, Populism, industrialism, Progressivism, the influence of the KKK (especially in Kansas) in the 1920's, the Great Depression, and *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka,*

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Kansas (1954). The Kansas standards are unique in their integration of United States history and state history.

The U.S. history sixth grade "indicators" (content topics) are reasonably complete for the colonization period to 1763, covering the explorers (without mentioning their European origins), the regional differentiation of colonial settlements, the evolution of slavery, and conflicts with Native Americans. Unfortunately, there is no topic examining the development of democratic values and institutions in the colonies. As a result, the transition to the Revolutionary era (to 1800) is abrupt and somewhat disjointed. Also, key political developments of the 1790s—such as precedents set in the administrations of Washington and Adams, the development of political parties, and the election of Jefferson in 1800—need explication.

The Kansas standards (for grades 6, 8, and 11) also specifically identify (with a triangle icon) topics in U.S. history to be evaluated in state assessments. The choices are inevitably somewhat arbitrary: the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation are marked with an assessment icon, while the compromises at the Constitutional Convention are not. In any case, the Kansas standards are noteworthy for identifying core priorities that will eventually be linked to statewide testing.

Eighth-grade U.S. history, through 1900, covers most of the key political developments in the antebellum period, including Jacksonian democracy, social changes, new patterns of immigration, and technological innovations (cotton gin, railroads, steamboats). The curriculum also encompasses the Civil War and Reconstruction, late nineteenth-century immigration, industrialization, the Indian wars, and America's new role as a world power resulting from the Spanish-American War and the debate over acquisition of the Philippines. Late nineteenth-century Indian policies are explored in depth (in three separate topic indicators), but the language is balanced and never tendentious.

Finally, eleventh-grade U.S. history recapitulates the periods from colonization through 1900 before turning to the twentieth century. The social history of the 1920s, for example, is explored thoroughly, avoiding the common tendency to treat the "roaring twenties" as little more than a frenzied interlude between the administrations of the Democratic giants, Wilson and FDR. Political history, however, is missing entirely—Hoover is not mentioned in the material on the Great Depression, and there is nothing on the creation of FDR's political coalition, which made the Democrats the majority party for nearly half a century.

The Kansas Curricular Standards in U.S. history have significant substantive merit. However, the integration of Kansas and American history creates some confusing overlap, and it is sometimes difficult to determine where one stops and the other begins. Specific content guides for each grade would go a long way toward solving this problem and would also clarify the sequential progression of U.S. history in the Kansas curriculum.

More than a century ago, Kansas journalist William Allen White demanded to know, "What's the matter with Kansas?" If the state's leading historians and educators can fill in some curricular gaps and clarify some content expectations, the answer—at least in connection with the state's U.S. history standards—will be, "not a thing."

KENTUCKY

(Assessment based on Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools: Grades Primary-12; Core Content for Assessment (Social Studies); Social Studies Model Implementation Manuals (U.S. History), 1999, Kentucky Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Kentucky

Comprehensive Historical Content: 3

Sequential Development: 3

Balance: 3

F

Total Score: 9 (30 percent)

The Kentucky Core Content for Assessment begins with an apparent inconsistency. First, it asserts that this material "represents the content that has been identified

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as essential for all students to know and will be included on the state assessment." But, a few lines later, the same document explains that "Core Content is not intended to be curriculum standards and it does not reflect a state curriculum." Similarly, the Program of Studies for Kentucky Schools assures parents that an effort has been made "to ensure that all students across the commonwealth are provided with common content and have opportunities to learn at a high level. . . . The Purpose of the Program of Studies is to outline the *minimum* [emphasis added] content required for all students before graduating from Kentucky high schools." Clearly, minimum is the operative word for the U.S. history content in these documents.

Kentucky students study American history in the fifth grade (Kentucky history and a U.S. survey from exploration to the present), the eighth grade (the pre-colonial era to Reconstruction), and the eleventh (since Reconstruction). If teachers, parents, or students are seeking specific guidance about what should be learned at any of these grade levels, these Kentucky Department of Education documents do not provide many answers. Nothing approaching a coherent outline of substantive history appears in any of them. The material, at best, is extremely general and virtually anonymous (few real historical figures are ever mentioned).

Fifth-grade students, for example, are expected to "use resource materials to gather significant information regarding the life of Thomas Jefferson. Create a time-line outlining important dates in his life. Create Jefferson silhouettes including important contributions he has made to the United States. Participate in trivia contests to reinforce these contributions. Write letters thanking him for his contributions." Surely, 10-year-old students are capable of more than "trivial pursuit" and shallow hero-worship disguised as historical education.

For eighth grade, the Core Content for Assessment asserts that "America's diverse society began with the 'great convergence' of European, African, and Native American people beginning in the late fifteenth century." There is nothing in any of these documents to suggest that students will examine historical material that either supports or challenges this simplistic interpretation or explain in a more nuanced fashion what it might actually mean. Instead, it is simply declared to be an established truth.

Nonetheless, by grade 8, students will presumably be ready to "examine the impact of significant individuals and groups in early United States history" and "analyze the social, political, and economic characteristics of eras in American history to Reconstruction." These entirely amorphous and unattainable goals are repeated almost verbatim in eleventh grade, suggesting that the document's writers do not expect cumulative knowledge or skills to have been developed in the three years since eighth grade. The Core Content for Assessment also declares, "Different perspectives (e.g., gender, race, region, ethnic group, nationality, age, economic status, religion, politics) result in different interpretations of historical events." Historical *knowledge*, it seems, is not even a factor in interpreting historical events. Sample activities for attaining "historical perspective" include: "participate in simulations that indicate ways different events and experiences may be interpreted differently. Limit the ability of certain people to 'function' within the room and compare to the treatment of Japanese-Americans in World War II"—a bizarre example of underestimating the intelligence of 16-year-old students.

In fact, these documents contain no evidence that hard, substantive choices were made to select the core content in U.S. history "identified as essential for all students to know." The absence of explicit content and grade-level expectations completely undercuts the desired goal of providing "all students opportunities to learn at a high level."

As far as Kentucky's standards are concerned, history is descriptive, rather than analytical. Kentucky's students are expected to focus on facts without any real understanding of what is involved in interpreting those facts. When the sun shines bright on this not very old Kentucky framework, it illuminates a nearly empty shell.

LOUISIANA

(Assessment based on Louisiana Social Studies Content Standards: State Standards for Curriculum Development, 1997; Teachers' Guide to Statewide Assessment: Social Studies, 2000, Louisiana Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Louisiana

Comprehensive Historical Content: 5

Sequential Development: 5

Balance: 5

D

Total Score: 15 (50 percent)

The Louisiana Social Studies Content Standards are intended to encompass "*rigorous and challenging standards that will enable all Louisiana students to become lifelong learners and productive citizens for the 21st century*" [emphasis in original]. But, the document continues, "A reasonable balance between breadth of content and depth of inquiry must be achieved." History is identified in the standards as one of the four core social studies disciplines (along with geography, economics, and civics). Louisiana students are expected to master several "foundation skills" to facilitate their study of history: communications, problem solving, resource access, and linking and generating knowledge.

Louisiana history, as well as some general U.S. history, begins in K-4. The Content Standards in U.S. history, for grades 5-8, begin with the familiar "three worlds meet" model. The background and interaction among these "three worlds" comprise key themes for the segments on the early colonies. But students also study the development of religious freedom and "changing political institutions in the English colonies" as well as "the impact of European cultural, political and economic ideas and institutions on life in the Americas." There is, however, no explicit reference to the evolution of democratic values and institutions—without which the subsequent study of the Revolution lacks a real historical foundation. Louisiana also ignores the origins and evolution of slavery, which is particularly disappointing in a state that provides an ideal case study of the development of the peculiar institution under French, Spanish, and American rule. In short, the two critical themes—democracy and slavery—that shape American history to 1860 are missing.

The section on the American Revolution and the new nation is excessively general, covering the causes and impact of the Revolution "on the institutions and practices of government" through the 1790s. No specific events are listed as historical priorities; for example, the Stamp Act, the Continental Congress, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitutional Convention are never mentioned. In addition, the topics are anonymous; not a single name appears in any of the benchmarks. It is a revolution without Franklin, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, etc.

The remainder of the U.S. history sequence is much the same. Jackson is specifically mentioned because of Jacksonian democracy, but the entire section on the Civil War and Reconstruction—which only asks about the causes and impact of the war and for a comparison of reconstruction plans—never mentions Lincoln or, for that matter, Robert E. Lee. No historical figures are specifically cited as worthy of study. Again, the topics are simply too general, and there is no way to assess whether students are getting a reliable introduction, for example, to the divisive role of slavery from the Constitutional Convention through the Missouri Compromise and the Dred Scott decision.

The post-Reconstruction topics are even broader and more sweeping. They merely touch on "the impact of industrialization in the United States" from 1870-1900, "the significant economic, political, social and cultural changes that have occurred in the United States during the 20th century," and "the impact of the Great Depression and World War II on American society."

The entire span of American history, from "three worlds meet" through the period since 1945, is recapitulated in high school. However, the topics remain highly general, and many key items are still missing. For example, students are expected to analyze "the significant changes that resulted from interactions among the peoples of Europe, Africa, and the Americas" but there

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is nothing about slavery in Africa or the origins of slavery in America. Students will later presumably discuss "the causes, developments, and effects of the Great Depression and the New Deal" but there is no mention of Hoover, FDR, or a single New Deal initiative.

The Louisiana Social Studies Content Standards take a modest step toward providing Louisiana students with core curriculum content in U.S. history. If, as the old saying goes, "Well begun is half done," then Louisiana is perhaps halfway to having sensible American history standards. But if they do not take the necessary next steps and give more meaning to their often-vague outline, "half done" may also mean "half-baked."

MAINE

(Assessment based on Maine's Common Core of Learning, 1990; State of Maine Learning Results, 1997; Maine Educational Assessment, 1998-1999, Maine Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Maine

Comprehensive Historical Content: 0

Sequential Development: 0

Balance: 2 (NA)

F

Total Score: 2 (7 percent)

Maine's Common Core of Learning was produced by a forty-five-member commission more than a decade ago. The lengthy introduction, "The Commission's Journey," announces that "Our early meetings focused on what skills and attitudes graduating high school students should possess to be productive citizens, what will be essential for them to know considering the demands the twenty-first century will place on them as adults." The Commission included social studies among eight subject areas requiring "a common core of knowledge" organized around four core levels of understanding: personal and global stewardship; communication; reasoning and problem solving; and understanding the human record.

American history, unfortunately, is alluded to in only a few sentences. The report refers to core concepts in history but makes no effort to identify them. Indeed, the entire U.S. history "content" in the document consists of some general references to "eras and major concepts . . . in American history, the democratic principles upon which the United States was founded," and demonstrating "a working knowledge of the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution." The Commission predicts, notwithstanding, that this social studies curriculum will allow students to "experience the democratic process and cultural richness of our society. They actively participate in the planning, monitoring, and evaluating of their learning experiences. Together they discuss, debate, and hold mock trials and other simulations, learning interactively and gaining self-confidence and skills." There is, however, no indication of what they will learn about U.S. history that would prepare them for these mock trials of historical figures.

The State of Maine Learning Results, issued seven years later, do provide a bare outline of major periods in U.S. history (for example, The Americas to 1600; Nation Building, 1783-1815; the Progressive Era, 1890-1914; Contemporary United States, 1961-Present) but it is still impossible to determine what the Maine Department of Education has concluded should or will be taught in U.S. history. Students, however, are supposed to be equipped to "Identify and analyze major events and people that characterize each of the significant eras" in U.S. history, despite the fact that these documents do not mention specific events or people.

Finally, the Maine Educational Assessment items do not inspire a great deal of confidence in the rigorous teaching of United States history. The "Intermediate" social studies questions, presumably for middle school students, include:

"How do you feel about the following statements?

My knowledge of social studies will be useful to me in my future work.

A. strongly agree
B. agree
C. disagree
D. strongly disagree

I learn in school most of what I need to answer the MEA [Maine Educational Assessment] social studies questions.

A. strongly agree
B. agree
C. disagree
D. strongly disagree"

Maine educators seem to have forgotten their initial concern about "what skills and attitudes graduating high school students should possess to be productive citizens" and have failed to provide any evidence of historical content or a cumulative learning sequence in their supposed U.S. history curriculum. It has been said that the rising sun can first be seen in the United States from the top of Mount Katahdin, but there is no light at all in Maine's Common Core of Learning.

MARYLAND

(Assessment based on Maryland Social Studies High School Core Learning Goals, 1999; Maryland Social Studies Standards, 2000; Draft Grade-By-Grade Social Studies Content Standards, 2001, Maryland State Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Maryland

Comprehensive Historical Content: **8**

Sequential Development: **5**

Balance: **8**

C

Total Score: **21 (70 percent)**

The Maryland Social Studies Standards declare that social studies is "an essential component of students' education" because it helps them "develop the knowledge and skills to understand and cope with change, resolve conflict, analyze issues, and appreciate diversity in a representative democracy." These goals can be achieved if students master five "learning perspectives" when they complete high school [italics in original]:

- *The spatial perspective:* understanding their "interaction with the natural environment."
- *The chronological perspective:* grasping "the causes and consequences of events."
- *The individual perspective:* "how individuals make decisions to meet their personal needs."
- *The organizational perspective:* "how people organize themselves into groups to meet their collective needs."
- *The comparative perspective:* "how individuals, groups, societies, and cultures are similar and different throughout the world."

History, the standards contend, facilitates this learning process by helping students achieve chronological and individual perspective. In fact, the study of history cannot be pigeon-holed so neatly since it obviously includes all of these perspectives—and much more. The important and truly great figures in history often made decisions for their country or society rather than for meeting their personal needs.

Maryland students begin the study of U.S. history in fifth grade. The topics are framed coherently, beginning with Native American, European, and African societies before the era of exploration and moving through settlement and the sectional differences among the colonies. Most importantly, the material includes the development of religious freedom, "early democratic ideas and practices," and the "gradual institutionalization of slavery"—a balanced introduction to critical developments in the seventeenth century that had a significant impact on the Revolutionary era and the founding of the federal system. The topics are anonymous, however, never mentioning the names of historical figures, which is particularly important since this is the only time that Maryland students study the colonial era.

Eighth-grade U.S. history briefly recapitulates the Revolutionary and Constitutional periods. The topics refer (again namelessly) to "key leaders in the writing and ratification of the United States Constitution" but finally identify three real presidents: Washington, Adams, and Jefferson. The inclusion of westward expansion, Indian removal, economic growth, the

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expansion of slavery, Jacksonian politics, the national debate over slavery, reform movements, the black experience in the South and the North, etc., provides a good foundation for understanding the context of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Twelfth-grade U.S. history briefly recapitulates the Civil War and Reconstruction before taking on the origins of modern America: industrialization, technological development, urbanization, political developments, Populism, Progressivism, etc. Students are also asked to explain arguments for and against the New Deal and to evaluate the successes and failures of relief, recovery and reform efforts in the 1930s. The pattern of largely anonymous history is broken in the coverage of the 1920s; the standards include the names of social reformers, women's suffrage activists, and Harlem Renaissance writers, but, ironically, the subsequent discussion of the Great Depression and the New Deal never mentions Hoover or FDR. Nonetheless, the substantive depth of the Maryland standards continues for the rest of twentieth century U.S. history. The High School Core Learning Goal exercises, for example, ask students to analyze FDR's order to intern Japanese-Americans in the context of a series of presidential executive orders: Jackson's order for removal of the Cherokees (actually carried out under Van Buren), Lincoln's suspension of *habeas corpus*, Truman's integration of the armed forces, and Eisenhower's order on school desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas.

U.S. history is quite comprehensive in the Maryland Social Studies Standards despite the fact that sequential development and substantive recapitulation are very limited. Maryland's citizens and students would also be better served by a much more consistent inclusion of the names of key historical figures to be studied in each of the time periods and topics.

MASSACHUSETTS

(Assessment based on the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework, 2002, Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Massachusetts

Comprehensive Historical Content: **8**

Sequential Development: **9**

Balance: **10**

A

Total Score: **27 (90 percent)**

The introduction to the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework, likely written with September 11, 2001, in mind, begins with an impassioned defense of democracy as "the worthiest form of human governance ever conceived." But, the framework also contends, democratic values and institutions "are neither revealed truths nor natural habits," and their survival depends on transmitting "a solid base of factual [historical] knowledge" to successive generations of young Americans.

The Massachusetts framework, which treats history as an independent discipline rather than as one facet of social studies, introduces students to Massachusetts and American history in the early grades (Pre-K-4) with materials emphasizing *e pluribus unum*: from the many, one. However, the exemplary core content sub-topics and emphasis on engaging students in the early grades with narrative historical readings (as used in the 1997 version) have been largely eliminated from the 2002 revised framework, making it less useful for helping teachers bring to life the links among people, events and ideas in American history. Elementary school teachers in the early grades, who often have little if any historical training or knowledge, need all the substantive guidance they can get.[15]

American history begins in-depth in grade 5. The material on pre-Columbian civilizations mentions their use of slaves—one of very few state standards to do so.

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(Human sacrifice, however, is not explicitly addressed, not even under "religious practices.") This section is particularly strong on the origins of democratic principles and institutions, and it makes plain that colonial life was "largely shaped" by English settlers and traditions "even though other major European nations also explored the New World." This conclusion may rankle advocates of the "three worlds meet" model, but it is more historically precise.

On the other hand, the section covering the period to 1700 unaccountably leaves out the origins and development of slavery in the colonies. This essential topic finally appears, erroneously, in the period from 1700 to 1775. (In fact, slavery had been legitimized in colonial laws by the 1660s, and the first slaves in Massachusetts arrived on the Salem ship *Desire* in the 1630s.) In addition, the reference to the harsh conditions of the Middle Passage never mentions the crucial role of African slave traders in this horrendous traffic. This section is exceptionally strong, however, on the connection between local self-rule and democracy in the colonies and the genesis of the crisis with England after 1763.

The sections on the Revolution through the early federal period touch on most key historical events and developments and, unlike many other states, Massachusetts includes "the life and achievements" of specific leaders of that period—no anonymous history here. Some historians would quarrel with the language about the "failure" of the Articles of Confederation, but the full story is probably too complex to explain at the fifth-grade level. The material on "changes in voting qualifications between 1787 and 1820" is exemplary, especially when asking students to compare the franchise in early nineteenth-century America to that in contemporary England, France, and Russia. However, the topics do not include the growth of political parties beginning in the 1790s—the other side of the coin of this expanding franchise—an odd omission for the state that virtually invented American politics.

U.S. History I, covering the period from 1763 to 1877, restarts the American history sequence. Teachers can choose to offer this course as early as the eighth grade or as late as tenth—resulting in a three-to-five-year gap in studying U.S. history. Many teachers, however, will likely welcome the opportunity to offer two consecutive years of American history in high school. But there is also a disadvantage to this sequence: the colonial era before 1763 is covered only once, in fifth grade, when students are not prepared to deal with many complex and contentious issues (such as the origins of slavery).

U.S. History I recapitulates developments from the Revolution through the early republic, and the material on the intellectual, political, and legal development of democratic ideas and practices is particularly solid. However, the framework completely ignores the impact of the Revolutionary idea of liberty on the institution of slavery: several thousand blacks served in the Continental Army and thousands of slaves fought for the British in response to (disingenuous) offers of emancipation, while anti-slavery sentiment increased substantially in the North. The framework does refer to "the rapid growth of slavery in the South after 1800," especially because of "the impact of the cotton gin on the economics of slavery and Southern agriculture," but it fails to explain the crucial distinction between the anti-slavery and abolitionist points of view in the antebellum era.

U.S. History I is also very skimpy on political history: Jacksonian political developments are covered, but the dissolution of the Whig party and the formation of the Republican Party in 1854—two crucial events on the road to the Civil War—are not included. Similarly, in U.S. History II, political history is completely missing for the final quarter of the nineteenth century. Also, the post-World War I Red Scare and the Sacco-Vanzetti trial should be clearly identified as taking place *during the Wilson administration* rather than in the loosely-defined "1920s." (In 1921, Warren Harding pardoned Eugene V. Debs, sentenced to ten years in prison for opposing the war under Wilson's 1918 Sedition Act; and, in 1923, Calvin Coolidge pardoned the remaining 31 prisoners still jailed for wartime sedition).

The two high school U.S. history courses outlined in the Massachusetts Framework may be too detailed to get beyond World War II or the Cold War. But there is little point in rushing to discuss recent or current events without first building a solid foundation in the first three and a half centuries of American history. The present Massachusetts framework is somewhat less specific than its 1997 predecessor, but its balanced consid-

eration of both historical thinking and historical content still provides a substantive model that many other states would do well to study.

MICHIGAN

(Assessment based on Michigan Curriculum Framework, 1996; Michigan Authentic Assessment of Social Studies; The Social Studies History Themes Project, 2001, Michigan Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Michigan

Comprehensive Historical Content: 3

Sequential Development: 3

Balance: 3

F

Total Score: 9 (30 percent)

The 1996 Michigan Curriculum Framework claims that it is intended to help schools "design, implement, and assess their core content area curricula" by identifying models of "rigorous expectations for student performance." The social studies "vision statement" emphasizes the need for students to achieve "social understanding and civic efficacy." Studying history is supposed to help students realize the goal of Social Studies Strand 1—Historical Perspective—which "begins with knowledge of significant events, ideas, and actors from the past. That knowledge encompasses both our commonalities and our diversity exemplified by race, ethnicity, social and economic status, gender, region, politics, and religion."

The historical perspective strand is, in turn, divided into four standards: Time and Chronology; Comprehending the Past; Analyzing and Interpreting the Past; and Judging Decisions in the Past. However, when these four "standards" are actually applied to American history courses for students at all grade levels, the result is a historically anonymous (no names mentioned) and substantively vacant set of generalizations. Students are expected "to sequence chronologically the following eras of American history and key events within these eras in order to examine relations and to explain cause and effect"—from the Meeting of Three Worlds (beginnings to 1620) through the Contemporary United States (1968-present). The Michigan framework does not explain what "sequence," used as a verb, means in this context. In fact, the first two benchmark goals under historical perspective in middle school U.S. history (through 1877) merely ask students to "construct and interpret timelines of people and events from the history of Michigan and the United States" and to "describe major factors that characterize the following eras." The same benchmarks are used again for high school students—this time for the period from 1877 to the present. These benchmarks, of course, are far too broad to be of any practical use.

This pattern persists through all four historical perspective "content standards." Most benchmark topics are repeated, in most cases verbatim, for students at different grade levels in U.S. history. Middle and high school students, for example, are both expected to use "narratives and graphic data" to explain "significant events that shaped the development of Michigan as a state and the United States as a nation" and to discuss "the responses of individuals to historic [*sic*] violations of human dignity involving discrimination, persecution, and crimes against humanity." There is not the slightest hint that students at more advanced levels are expected to be capable of dealing with more advanced content, questions, or thinking.

The more recent (2001) Michigan Social Studies History Themes Project, produced in consultation with professional historians in the state, has produced a somewhat more detailed breakdown of the U.S. history material in the fifth, eighth, and eleventh grades. But the subtopics are sometimes politically slanted and presentistic. For example, one theme explains that members of the Iroquois Confederation came together "to settle matters such as war and trade. Matters of mutual importance were decided by a Great Council that was composed of members of all five tribes. . . . All had to agree, unanimously, before any action was taken." This theme, however, reveals only part of the story: the Iroquois did not always seek peaceful consensus for their actions and were notorious for engaging in brutal warfare against other Indian tribes.

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Likewise, the theme treating early slavery in the colonies contends, "Slavery as an institution while *universally abhorrent* [emphasis added] did not operate under a single set of rules." In fact, slavery was not "universally abhorrent" to people living in the seventeenth century. On the contrary, it is essential for students to understand, no matter how abhorrent it is today, that slavery was taken for granted all over the world at that time and even defended as a necessary and desirable fact of life.

The Michigan Authentic Assessment of Social Studies, also added several years after the 1996 framework, offers more of the same. A middle school "focus question" on the debate over slavery at the Constitutional Convention asks students: "What *should* [emphasis added] the delegates to the Constitutional Convention have put in the Constitution on the subject of slavery?"—an explicit invitation to presentism and moralistic judgments rather than an attempt to educate students about what the Convention actually did and why. Similarly, a "public policy question" asks, "Should the United States government compensate African Americans who can trace their ancestry to former slaves for the loss of their freedom?" One wonders how teachers would respond if a student brought up the African side of the slavery equation in the classroom (or on an exam) and suggested to his or her peers that the United States was not exclusively or even principally responsible for the slave trade. Setting up a category called "Judging Decisions in the Past" as a standard for student learning might be reasonable for scholars with a strong background in the context and options of the time, but it is not a realistic standard for students and instead promotes judgmentalism and contemporary arrogance.

Advocates of the framework's presentistic approach may defend it as an effort to encourage students to understand that contemporary issues have roots in the past, but the content standards and themes often neglect to teach students about the "differentness" of the past. The Michigan social studies sequence in U.S. history is neither history nor a sequence.

MINNESOTA

(Assessment based on High Standards, 1999; Social Studies: A Guide for Curriculum Development to Support Minnesota's High Standards, 2001, Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning) (Minnesota is currently revising its standards.)

STATE REPORT CARD

Minnesota

Comprehensive Historical Content: 2

Sequential Development: 1

Balance: 2

F

Total Score: 5 (17 percent)

The soon-to-be-replaced Minnesota High Standards claim to "define what students should know and be able to do" by the time they graduate from high school. In reality, these standards, in keeping with the substantively watered-down approach advocated by many American schools of education since the early twentieth century, reject anything resembling a real academic curriculum.[16] The Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning organized its standards around so-called "Learning Areas": "Read, Listen, and View," "Write and Speak," "The Arts," "Mathematical Applications," "Inquiry," "Applied Scientific Methods," "People and Cultures," "Decision-Making," and "Resource Management." The fragments of what could be called "history" are included, or more accurately buried, in "Inquiry" and "Peoples and Cultures."

In fact, it is virtually impossible to find any history, not to mention American history, anywhere in the so-called High Standards. Under "Peoples and Cultures," for example, the primary content standards explore "how different people may respond differently to the same event." The intermediate content standards tell students to "describe a past event from the point of view of a local community member." The middle-level content standards attempt to analyze "historical events from the point of view of participants." Finally, the high school content standards aim to "illustrate the influence of diverse ideals or beliefs on a theme or an event in the historical development of the United States." The sum total of U.S. history in the High Standards is an insipid

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list of eras: "the convergence of people, colonization, settlement, and the American Revolution; expansion, the Civil War, and the Reconstruction; tribal sovereignty and the relationship between American Indian tribal governments and federal and state government; industrialization, the emergence of modern America, and the Great Depression; World War II; and postwar United States to the present."

Perhaps in response to widespread criticism of the initial (1998) version of the High Standards, the state released a guide to curriculum development to support "the key concepts and skills that students must acquire to achieve Minnesota's High Standards in the Social Studies Learning Area" (2001). The section on "Historical Thinking and Understanding" is far better at saying what those things are not than at defining what they are, and reduces history to vague, barely literate, and trendy relativism: "True historical thinking and understanding goes [*sic*] far beyond a collection of stories. History is often presented as a collection of dates, places, and events and subsequently misunderstood as being a collection of trivia rather than as an intellectual discipline. Stories of famous presidents, great battles, or social movements are sometimes treated as if their value were obvious to all. History includes using historical themes to organize and analyze information. It includes the development of questioning and the exploration of possibilities. It demands that we recognize perspective and values."

The social studies curriculum guide goes on to claim that once Minnesota students reach high school "they should be able to organize a historical narrative with a clear thesis and strong supporting evidence. However, the "key student understandings" in the guide merely refer to "key people," "key events," "specific historical themes," "historical stories and timelines," "regions and eras," "patterns to compare and contrast," "life in other times," "diverse perspectives," "diverse ideals and beliefs across eras and among world regions," and "the motives of recorders of history" without mentioning a single person, event, theme, story, region, era, pattern, life, perspective, or motive in American history.

Minnesota's High Standards set lofty goals but never set clear priorities or define the core historical content that students "should know and be able to do" upon graduating from high school. Standards expressed in purely abstract terms, grounded in neither place nor time, end up being little more than a collection of vague exhortations, disguised (not very convincingly) as intellectual concepts. By passing over clear, specific and essential subject matter in favor of trendy jargon and relativism, these standards virtually guarantee historical ignorance among Minnesota's high school graduates. It is encouraging, however, to learn that a comprehensive reworking of this state's standards is now underway.

MISSISSIPPI

(Assessment based on Mississippi Social Studies Framework, 1998, Mississippi Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Mississippi

Comprehensive Historical Content: 4

Sequential Development: 4

Balance: 4

F

Total Score: 12 (40 percent)

The Mississippi Social Studies Framework mission statement declares that the purpose of social studies is "to promote an understanding of the world, human interaction, cultural diversity" and to provide "a specific body of knowledge centered on *history, geography, civics and economics*, as well as the other social sciences" [emphasis in original].

The specific study of history begins in the fourth grade (with Mississippi history) and moves on to a general survey of U.S. history in the fifth grade. It is impossible, however, to find the "specific body of [historical] knowledge" promised above. Indeed, the suggested teaching strategies are incomplete and sometimes misleading. For example, teachers and students are expected to "Track immigration patterns of various cultural groups (e.g., African slaves, Asian, and European immigrants, etc.) into and within the United States." Surely, Africans were not conventional immigrants and "mak-

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ing a graph of immigrants in your hometown" and "researching Ellis Island" would not be very useful in explaining the unique circumstances surrounding the arrival of Africans in America. One might expect Mississippi history educators to be especially mindful of this distinction.

The fifth-grade introductory survey is also organized around several very general themes: "cultural interaction," "foundations of democracy," "a new country," and "expansion of a new nation." As a result, the suggested teaching strategies jump between topics and time periods and fail to provide any coherence, chronological or otherwise. In addition, the teaching strategies never identify any actual historical individuals; this is anonymous history with broad and sweeping goals. Students are asked, for example, to "compare and contrast colonial and modern time periods" as they relate to family and individual responsibilities, economy, forms of government, culture, education, and citizenship. The teaching strategy on westward expansion suggests that students "Experiment with overcrowding to experience the need for expansion (e.g., tape off an area of floor in the classroom and choose students to fill this area to capacity and brainstorm problems due to overcrowding.)" This exercise has nothing to with history and distorts the real issues that prompted westward expansion (which had little or nothing to do with overcrowding). There is no coherent, sequential, or substantive history in this kind of activity, and, typical of social studies, it grossly underestimates what teachers can and should know and teach and what students can and should learn.

The eighth-grade U.S. survey (to 1877) is just as vague and diffuse. The grade-level list of competencies and suggested objectives in the framework does provide a very general chronological historical framework (from pre-Columbian societies through the tensions over the expansion of slavery) but again there is nothing approaching a core body of historical knowledge and no names of real people.

In an astonishing act of hubris, students are asked to "create a Native American artifact," (by definition, an "artifact" is supposed to be an authentic object from the time!), to write a brief essay to explain "democratic principles in Native American cultures and their influence," and to "explain the role of Native Americans in our society today." Yet, ironically, students apparently get to the American Revolution without ever considering the evolution of actual democratic ideas and institutions during the colonial period (except for the presumed presence of such values in Native American cultures). Similarly, the establishment of slavery in the seventeenth century and the compromises over slavery at the Constitutional Convention are not included in the teaching strategies, and there is no evidence of a systematic discussion of the impact of slavery on sectional tensions from the Missouri Compromise through the election of Lincoln.

Students, instead, can spend their time in classic ahistorical social studies busy work: creating a poster or brochure "which would motivate settlers to come to America"; rewriting the Declaration of Independence in "today's language" [why?]; creating posters illustrating the changes in American life resulting from industrialization, and filling a bag with different objects and using the "assembly method" to create a product; defining "abolitionism by creating a poem, poster, political cartoon, or play." The suggested teaching strategies actually get through the Civil War and Reconstruction without mentioning slavery. [17]

The U.S. survey since 1877, a full-year course for eleventh-grade students, provides no evidence that more rigorous content will be offered or that higher levels of academic work will be expected. The list of competencies and suggested objectives is again extremely general ("Explain the changing role of the United States in world affairs since 1877"), and there is no indication that a core of essential knowledge has been chosen or is being taught. Students can, according to the suggested strategies for teaching, "Role play a talk show with guests who are complaining about working conditions in factories and mines," "Trace the accomplishments of reform movements," "Role play street interviewers with German-American, Irish-American, as well as 'main-street Americans', to reflect various reactions to the Zimmerman telegram," or "Create an individual project presenting information on the culture of the 1920s." It is truly remarkable how the authors of these standards shrink from precision when presenting historical content, but remain entirely willing to prescribe the most detailed and banal classroom methods.

Since the material in the suggested classroom strategies is organized thematically, rather than chronologically, a subject such as civil rights, from the post-Reconstruction Jim Crow laws through the 1964 Civil Rights Act, is covered as a unit instead of being embedded in the history of the period in which an event (such as the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision) actually took place. Separating the racial dimension of Populism and Progressivism from the actual history of these movements, for example, makes little sense historically and is unlikely to generate a coherent sense of history in students.

The Mississippi Social Studies Framework fails to make the hard choices required to create a core of essential historical knowledge. Also, once students have studied U.S. history to 1877 in eighth grade, that period is never covered again in high school. Surely, the levels of understanding and complexity expected and required of eighth and eleventh graders should not be considered interchangeable.

Vague thematic approaches, however well-intentioned, do not constitute historical content in any meaningful sense. They are likely instead to leave students with, at best, a superficial knowledge of history and no real understanding of how America has changed over time. Mississippi educators would do well to look east to their neighbor, Alabama, for guidance on building a better program.

MISSOURI

(Assessment based on Missouri's Framework for Curriculum Development in Social Studies K-12, 1996; Content Specifications for Statewide Assessment by Standard: Social Studies Grades, 4, 8, & 11, 1999, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Missouri

Comprehensive Historical Content: 3

Sequential Development: 3

Balance: 4

F

Total Score: 10 (33 percent)

The Missouri "Show-Me" standards begin with familiar language about "rigorous standards—intended to define what students should know and be able to do by the time they graduate from Missouri's public high schools." The recommended strategies include "a multisensory approach to teaching and learning," "presenting concepts in several ways," creating "model learning strategies," and encouraging "problem solving." The framework makes clear, however, that these materials are "not detailed lesson plans or curricula," are not mandated by state law and are not required of local districts. History, the framework also explains, is only one component of social studies, along with half a dozen other subjects from the humanities and social sciences. This social studies mix "should engage students actively in their own learning" and "expand students' thinking across the boundaries of these separate academic subjects."

The framework also explains that "historical perspective" is only one element of social studies comprehension that includes "civic-political perspective," "social-cultural perspective," "economic perspective" and "geographic perspective." Just how historical perspective can be isolated from these other perspectives, all of which constitute essential elements of historical investigation and thinking, is never discussed, much less explained or justified. These five perspectives are in turn examined in the context of four questions:

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1) "Why have people established governance systems?"

2) "How do individuals relate to and interact with groups?"

3) "How do events and developments in this and other places relate to us and to each other?

4) "How do the lives of individuals and conditions in society affect each other?"

The achievement of these goals and objectives ultimately rests on the creation of the "rigorous [content] standards" cited above. Those hard choices, however, have not been made to date, and no real priorities are reflected in the current framework (not even as suggestions for local districts). The substantive content of the Missouri sample learning activities for teaching historical perspective, presumably indicating what students should know and be able to do, is also virtually anonymous—almost never referring to real people in connection with real historical events.

The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution *are* mentioned in the grade 5-8 listing of what all students should know. But the sample learning activities (under question one above) often amount to little more than the trivialization of history. Students can, for example, "create a series of posters portraying key events pertaining to the expansion of rights and freedoms in the United States." High school students are even encouraged to "Translate for younger students primary documents from formal English into less formal English or other forms they could understand." (Perhaps they could inspire historical imagination in these younger students by rewriting "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal" in "less formal English" as "We like think everyone should, like, you know, be equal.") As to "other forms" younger students "could understand," high schoolers could presumably rise to this rigorous, intellectual social studies challenge by using their "translation" as the lyrics for a rock song.

Grade 5-8 students (under question two above) are also challenged to "Observe television programs with settings in the past, infer details about life in the past from the programs, and research the accuracy of those details." There is nothing in the standards to suggest how students are going to make such judgments when they have had no exposure to a solid core of knowledge about the past. Similarly, high school students (under questions two and three above) can "Research everyday life of a particular time period, and create a picture book with text for younger students" or "appreciate some technology invented during some historical era, avoid the technology for an entire weekend and keep a log of observations." Presumably, these high school students could sit in a room at night without using electric lights and then report as their "research" findings that they couldn't see anything. One way or another, it seems likely that Missouri's students will be kept in the dark about American history.

Teachers, parents or students searching for the "rigorous standards" promised in the Missouri framework will not fare any better in the Missouri Content Specifications for Statewide Assessment in social studies. A typical assessment activity suggests "Given an age-appropriate, social studies-appropriate question for students to investigation [*sic*], students could be asked to identify resources they could use to study that question productively." No one, in context of this substantive historical vacuum, should be surprised to find that the only narrative/interpretive reference resource in U.S. history recommended in the framework is the James Loewen book discussed in the introduction—"because it is "accurate, interesting, and appropriate for citizenship education."

By ignoring the fact that the skills required for one discipline are not automatically transferable to other disciplines, the framework fails to ensure that students will acquire the thinking skills essential for "doing history." And, given the failure to include a sufficient number of people and events, there is no reason to assume that students will master the content required to effectively use those skills. The "Show-Me" standards have yet to show the citizens of Missouri comprehensive, sequential or coherent standards in U.S. history. Missouri's Harry Truman, an avid reader of American history, would be dismayed by these so-called "standards."

MONTANA

(Assessment based on Montana Standards for Social Studies, 2000, Montana Office of Public Instruction)

STATE REPORT CARD

Montana

Comprehensive Historical Content: 2

Sequential Development: 2

Balance: 2 (NA)

F

Total Score: 6 (20 percent)

The Montana Standards for Social Studies declare that social studies is "an integrated study of the social sciences and humanities" that "provides coordinated, systematic study of such disciplines as economics, history, geography, government, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and elements of the humanities." The social studies standards are organized around several "content standards" that reflect "what all students should know, understand and be able to do in a specific content area."

The history standard "rationale" also proclaims that students "need to understand their historical roots" and grasp "how events shape the past, present, and future." Students will apparently acquire this essential "historical understanding through inquiry of history by researching and interpreting historical events affecting personal, local, tribal, Montana, United States, and world history."

Montana's so-called "content standards," however, obscure rather than illuminate these academic disciplines. They talk about process and method and have little or nothing to do with essential content. The fourth standard, for example, ("Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships"), presumably represents the history component of this social studies blend, but it would be very difficult to make that determination based on the extremely thin content of the so-called "history" benchmarks.

In fact, the benchmarks in the Montana standards are a jumble of worthy but abstract process goals, applied in most cases to all fields of history—from local to world. A few appear to relate specifically to American history, but even these are extremely general and never identify anything approaching a core of essential knowledge. Students, for example, will "select and analyze various documents and primary and secondary sources that have influenced the legal, political and constitutional heritage of Montana and the United States." The history benchmarks also expect students to "analyze the significance of important people, events and ideas," but never mention important people or ideas. A few specifics are cited, such as the "American Revolution, Battle of the Little Bighorn, immigration, Women's Suffrage" but there is not a hint of how or even if these scattered topics can fit into a coherent and sequential U.S. history curriculum.

Similarly, the so-called "Performance Standards" in social studies, divided into four levels of student achievement— "Advanced," "Proficient," "Nearing Proficiency", and "Novice"—are impossible to assess without an accompanying framework of specific historical content. The history component of social studies is apparently studied in the fourth and eighth grades and one final time in high school. But the social studies performance standards, in effect, float in a historical vacuum: an "advanced" social studies high school graduate "consistently analyzes historical patterns and conducts independent research to thoroughly and effectively develop and defend a position on an issue;" for a "proficient" student, the standards simply drop the word "consistently" and substitute "adequately" for "thoroughly and effectively;" a "nearing proficiency" student can only identify "some" historical patterns, can conduct research "with assistance" and can only "partially defend" a position; and the novice student "sometimes" identifies patterns and, even with assistance, "has difficulty" defending a position.

Montana's parents have every right to ask just how teachers can make these judgments when the state standards never delineate what should be taught and learned in United States history. In short, Montana's standards are little more than pie in the big sky.

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NEBRASKA

(Assessment based on Nebraska K-12 Social Studies Standards, 1999, Nebraska State Board of Education and Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Nebraska

Comprehensive Historical Content: 7

Sequential Development: 10

Balance: 4

C

Total Score: 21 (70 percent)

The Nebraska K-12 Social Studies Standards declare that social studies "promotes civic competence through the integrated study of the social sciences and the humanities." The Nebraska curriculum, the standards further explain, "concentrates on the following social studies core content subjects: history, geography civics, economics, and government" and offers "discipline-based" classes in areas such as "United States history." The fact that history is listed first offers some cause for optimism about the historical substance of the Nebraska standards.

The Nebraska standards are nonetheless organized around "ten instructional themes" (civic ideals and practices; culture; global connection; individual development and identity; individuals, groups and institutions; people, places and environments; power, authority and governance; production, distribution and consumption; science, technology and society; and time, continuity, and change) that "help coordinate the social studies curriculum, encouraging connections between social studies and the subject areas." Some substantial historical content, notwithstanding, has made its way into the Nebraska curriculum despite the constraints imposed by this artificial, a-historical social studies perspective.

Kindergarten and first-grade social studies students receive an introduction to past events and people in legends, commemorative holidays, historical accounts, stories and biographies. The names covered include: Paul Revere, Betsy Ross, Davy Crockett, Paul Bunyan, George Washington, Harriet Tubman, Abraham Lincoln, Benjamin Franklin, Jane Addams, and George Washington Carver. In addition, they learn the names of the Presidents of the United States.

By the second, third and fourth grades, Nebraska students start to develop a sense of Nebraska and U.S. history beginning with Columbus and emphasizing, rather artificially, "the past and present contributions of people such as, the Native Americans, Hispanic Americans, African Americans, European Americans, and Asian Americans in Nebraska." Nebraskans discussed include George Norris, Black Elk, William Jennings Bryan and Malcolm X.

In grades 5 through 8, the Nebraska curriculum offers students a chronological survey of U.S. history from the pre-Columbian period to the modern era. The specific topics in colonial American history are detailed and well thought out, although the simultaneous origins of democratic institutions and slavery are not explicitly discussed. Students may also get to the Revolutionary era without an adequate understanding of why England's policy changes after 1763 were so abhorrent to the colonists.

The section on the roots of the U.S. Constitution first lists the influence of "the Native American heritage," specifically the Iroquois Confederacy and the "Great Binding Law." The "British and American heritage" from Magna Carta, the English Bill of Rights, the Mayflower Compact, the Articles of Confederation and the "philosophy of government" in the Declaration of Independence finishes in second place. Unfortunately for young Nebraskans, there is not a shred of evidence in the writings of the founders that the Iroquois Confederation had any impact on the drafting of the Constitution—not to mention the *primary impact*. (see introduction)

Except for that one egregious distortion, the topics for the period from 1789 to 1877 are reasonably inclusive if still uneven; for example, the clash between Jefferson and Hamilton that resulted in the formation of political parties is covered, but Jacksonian democracy and the later emergence of the Republican Party are skipped entirely. On the other hand, most of the major

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issues and personalities in the coming of the Civil War are included (with the notable exception of the extension of slavery into the territories, the single most important issue and central to Nebraska's early history). Students are also expected to understand the "different historical perspectives of people such as Native Americans; Hispanic Americans; African Americans; European Americans; Asian Americans." Evidently they are also expected to assume that perspective is principally determined by ethnicity and group identity.

The topics from 1877 to the present, probably as a result of simply running out of time in the second semester, are far sketchier and incomplete than those for the earlier period of U.S. history. For example, the topics jump from the impact of the New Deal on the Great Depression "and the future role of government in the economy" to the civil rights movement of the 1950s, without explicitly discussing World War II, the single most powerful factor in changing the role of the federal government in the lives of the American people and in the economy. Students are also expected to discuss "personalities and leaders of the period, such as Will Rogers, Eleanor and Franklin Roosevelt, and Charles Lindbergh"—an odd selection since Rogers died in 1935 and Lindbergh was completely discredited by 1941.

The high school U.S. history survey, which recapitulates the period from pre-Columbian explorations to modern America, is detailed but uneven. The material on the struggles over the drafting and ratification of the Constitution is exemplary (this time without the Iroquois Confederacy myth) but Jacksonian politics is again missing, the Louisiana Purchase is listed after the War of 1812, and the Monroe Doctrine and crucial developments on the home front during World War II are ignored.

The Nebraska standards do offer substantive American history education—especially since students study the full span of U.S. history in the middle grades and again in high school. Significant revisions are needed to eliminate gaps, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies, but the Nebraska standards represent a real step in the right direction.

NEVADA

(Assessment based on Nevada Social Studies Standards: History, 2000, Nevada Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Nevada

Comprehensive Historical Content: 7

Sequential Development: 7

Balance: 8

C

Total Score: 22 (73 percent)

"Knowledge of history," the Nevada Social Studies Standards affirm, "is the precondition of political intelligence" for "informed citizens, who can function effectively in the democratic process of a diverse society."

Nevada introduces some U.S. history in the earliest grades with general material on national holidays and symbols and Native American origins. American history begins more systematically with a selective survey in fifth grade, touching very generally on Nevada's Native Americans, the explorations of North America, colonial life, the Declaration of Independence and the Revolution, the War of 1812 and the national anthem, pioneers to the West, the Civil War, late-nineteenth-century inventors, immigration, etc. The fifth-grade course of study appears to be deliberately selective—concentrating on establishing basic historical chronology without getting into any contentious issues (slavery, for example, is not explicitly mentioned).

Eighth-grade U.S. history, on the other hand, begins with a far more detailed investigation of Native American cultures in Nevada and North America before moving on to the establishment, governance and lifestyles of the British colonies in North America. Students are expected to "describe the African slave trade," but the framework then jumps directly into the origins of the American Revolution. There is nothing in the standards to suggest that students have studied either the development of democratic institutions and values in the colonies or the origins of slavery in seventeenth-century America.

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Likewise, although the material through the Constitution and the Bill of Rights seems reasonably complete, the divisive compromises over slavery at the Constitutional Convention are not mentioned.

The substantive material in the eighth grade standards on the period from the Constitution to the Civil War is quite extensive in social, intellectual and economic history (covering the development of a national economy, an indigenous American culture, social reforms, and the emergence of political parties in the 1790s). However, political history then all but disappears from the framework. There is nothing on Jefferson's election, Jacksonian democracy, the politics of Indian removal and, most importantly, on the evolving political crises over slavery (beginning with the 1820 Missouri Compromise—which Jefferson referred to as "a fire bell in the night"). The standards mention the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments but skip from the Civil War to the emergence of Jim Crow without highlighting Reconstruction. Similarly, the framework jumps from late-nineteenth-century industrialization and immigration to women's suffrage and World War I without dealing with Populism or Progressivism.

The framework for the twelfth-grade U.S. history survey is far more detailed, but significant gaps do remain. There is a reference to the development of "unique" American political institutions in the colonial era, but again the origins of slavery is skipped except for brief allusions to "interactions" among Europeans and Africans and the "impact" of the African slave trade. Political history is again all but ignored for the antebellum period, just as it was in the eighth grade (see above). Reconstruction, postwar Indian policies, Populism and Progressivism, on the other hand, are included this time around, though post-1877 political history is still very thin. There is, for example, for the entire period from the election of Lincoln through the Cold War, not a single reference in the framework to the Republican or Democratic Parties. The Great Depression and New Deal are highlighted, but FDR is never mentioned.

Nevada, which did not enact any history standards until 2000, has clearly made a conscientious effort to introduce a credible U.S. history sequence. The sequential recapitulation of American history in the fifth, eighth and twelfth grades is particularly beneficial, but serious work, particularly in political history, remains to be done if Nevada is to identify and teach more of the essentials of U.S. history.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

(Assessment based on K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Framework, 1995, New Hampshire Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

New Hampshire

Comprehensive Historical Content: 5

Sequential Development: 4

Balance: 4

F

Total Score: 13 (43 percent)

The New Hampshire Social Studies Curriculum Framework claims to be "based on the significant body of research in social studies education, curriculum design and effective instructional practices carried out over the past decade." It asserts that "To be effective, the study of history must focus on broad, significant themes and questions . . . that provide students with context for the acquisition and understanding of facts and other useful information." Those themes, adopted from the 1989 Bradley Commission report on teaching history in schools, are: "Civilization, cultural diffusion and innovation," "Human interaction with the environment," "Values, beliefs, political ideas and institutions," "Conflict and cooperation," "Comparative history of major developments," and "Patterns of social and political interaction."

In the early grades, the framework touches very generally on New Hampshire and United States history (e.g., "the contributions to the development of the United States and New Hampshire of key women and men involved with the founding of our state and nation," "why various groups of people came to America," and "the origins, functions, and development of New Hampshire town meetings") but there does not

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appear to be a coherent U.S. history survey before the tenth grade.

The actual historical content of the New Hampshire framework at the high school level appears to be conceptually and intellectually compatible with the 1994 proposed *National Standards for United States History.* By the end of tenth grade U.S. history (to 1877), for example, students will be expected to: "Describe the factors that led to the meeting of people from three worlds (*The Great Convergence*) [italics in original] that followed the arrival of Columbus in 1492 including major cultural changes in 15th century Europe, the status and complexity of pre-Columbian societies in the Americas; and the status and complexity of West African societies in the 15th century," and discuss "the immediate impact and long-term consequences of *The Great Convergence.*" It is impossible to assess just how this material will be handled in the classroom since the outline is so general; but, if it is indeed rooted in the 1994 national standards, there is every likelihood that students will be given a biased and tendentious introduction to American history that disparages European and Western influence on early America, sanitizes pre-Columbian history by glossing over warfare and human sacrifice, and fails to discuss the role of Africans in the Atlantic slave trade.

The tenth-grade topics on the colonial era, for example, emphasize differences among English, French, Spanish, etc., colonies in North America and "the interaction of Native American, black and colonial cultures." The latter is almost certainly intended to deal with racial injustices relating to Native Americans and Africans in seventeenth-century America—absolutely legitimate and obligatory subjects for students of early American history. Yet, there is no indication in these general topics that, by the time students get to the American Revolution, they will *also* have an understanding of the uniquely democratic political institutions, ideas, and values that developed in colonial America (except for the earlier reference to New Hampshire town meetings). The tension between these two coexisting realities is, of course, a dominant theme in American history and in what the proposed national history standards called "the making of the American people."

The remaining tenth-grade topics seem reasonably comprehensive in social history but extremely inadequate in political history. All the topics are virtually anonymous; names of real people almost never appear (except in cases where it is unavoidable, such as "conflicting views of Hamilton and Jefferson"). The "formation of our national government" never mentions Washington; "the beginnings of judicial review" never mentions John Marshall. The emergence of political parties and presidential leadership is cited for the period from 1783-1820, but political history in the antebellum era (to 1860) is summed up in two words, "political change." Jacksonian politics, the expansion of the franchise, and other key developments are not mentioned. For the period from 1850-1877, political history is reduced to "causes of the war."

Twelfth-grade U.S. history, from 1877 to the present, follows much the same pattern—a list of very general topics, heavy emphasis on social history, and more historical anonymity: Progressivism without TR; World War I without Wilson; the Great Depression and the New Deal without FDR.

The New Hampshire framework is very short on sequential development in U.S. history—the periods up to and since 1877 are only studied once. Effective standards in U.S. history require more than these sweeping generalizations (especially when they sometimes seem ideologically "loaded"). Clear and substantive choices on historical essentials are indispensable. They will prove far more useful to teachers than wide-ranging themes such as "the emergence of the United States as a superpower." Granite State standards-makers need to think much harder about just what is needed to create a comprehensive and balanced U.S. history program.

NEW JERSEY

(Assessment based on Core Curriculum Content Standards: Social Studies, 1996; New Jersey Social Studies Curriculum Framework, 1999, New Jersey State Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

New Jersey

Comprehensive Historical Content: 5

Sequential Development: 4

Balance: 3

F

Total Score: **12 (40 percent)**

The introduction to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards asserts that these standards will provide essential social studies "knowledge and skills" and "empower educators" to effectively implement this knowledge. The Social Studies Curriculum Framework itself, which is 1.5 inches thick, promises to align these state content standards with the framework's own social studies curricula, but it makes clear that individual school districts will decide whether "to teach history chronologically or thematically."

The history component of social studies in the New Jersey scheme is organized around six "higher-order" thinking skills borrowed from the 1989 Bradley Commission study: chronological thinking, historical comprehension, historical analysis and interpretation, historical research capabilities, empathetic thinking, and analyzing historical issues and decision-making. The progressive development of knowledge in U.S. history, the framework explains, will be achieved within the following sequence: the colonial period (to 1763), the Revolution and early national period (1763-1820), the age of Civil War and Reconstruction (1820-1870) [*sic*—Reconstruction did not end until 1877], industrial America and the era of World War (1870-1945), and the modern age (1945 to present). The framework affirms, however, that teachers in grades K-4, 5-8 and 9-12 can draw from any of these time periods and stresses that "*This is not a coverage list*" [emphasis in original].

The specific historical material that follows in the framework bears out this last admonition. Instead of providing a clear and chronologically developed core curriculum in U.S. history, the New Jersey standards offer an eclectic set of so-called "learning activities" which jump back and forth among time periods in American and sometimes world history. The specific examples are often interesting and include useful bibliographical resources. K-4 students, for example, can visit the Old Barracks Museum in Trenton and then "decide" whether to join the Continental Army or remain loyal to the English crown. They can also study the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act and discuss whether laws regulating child labor were and are necessary. The problem is that the framework does not provide a coherent curriculum in U.S. history that would actually "empower" students with the knowledge required to tackle these difficult questions.

Grade 9-12 students, likewise, can discuss the fact that New Jersey was the only state that allowed women to vote after 1789, but rescinded the franchise in 1807. Students are asked to react to this intriguing fact by answering a completely non-historical question: "How do you feel about the right to vote?" Similarly, after discussing Robert E. Lee's decision to order Pickett's charge, they are encouraged to hold a classroom trial, "with a jury of twelve students," to "decide whether the General was guilty of lack of judgment and should have been relieved of his command." Or, in considering the origins of the Cold War, teachers "can tell the class that there are now three schools of thought on the Cold War," the "traditional" anti-Soviet view; the view which holds that both superpowers were "equally culpable;" and the more recent view, based on recently-declassified Soviet documents, that the threat from Soviet totalitarianism was very real. Can students adequately understand and judge the enormous complexities of the Cold War solely on the basis of what their teachers "tell" them about these conflicting historical interpretations?

These exercises, which sometimes encourage presentism and all but dictate the "correct" answer, obscure the real question about New Jersey's U.S. history curriculum: Have students acquired the specific content that will equip them to make these kinds of historical judgments? The framework asserts, *without any proof*, that by grades 9-12 students "will now have progressed to

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the point where their knowledge of history permits them to *speculate* [emphasis added] about the overarching factors that cause major and minor events to happen at a specific time in a specific place." How many history teachers or professors could actually do this or, for that matter, even say exactly what this means?

Some of the learning activities are also subtly biased: many focus on grim chapters in European and American history, such as the Spanish conquest of Mexico, British imperialism in the Far East, apartheid in South Africa, the Holocaust and the fate of Anne Frank, Columbus' arrival in America, slavery, discrimination against American women in education and voting, the internment of Japanese-Americans in World War II, and racism in suburban zoning.

But, non-Western history essentially gets a free ride. The section on the growth of Islam traces "the trade routes that ran through Baghdad during the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries" and describes Baghdad as "the ideal center of trade and commerce" that promoted "cultural exchanges throughout the Islamic world." Students would never suspect that this trade was largely in slaves (and gold). Millions of Africans were forced northward into slavery by the Muslim Arabs, in numbers nearly comparable to those later taken to the West in the transatlantic slave trade. In fact, the Islamic countries imported more slaves from Africa than all the nations of the Western Hemisphere combined. Why are these critical aspects of non-Western history overlooked? Similarly, when students learn that the Spaniards conquered the Aztecs, "with the help of Indian allies," they apparently do not learn why these Indians joined Cortez; neighboring Indian tribes feared and hated the Aztecs for enslaving and ritually sacrificing prisoners captured in warfare.

New Jersey educators have been so busy crafting politically safe "learning activities" for this historical framework that they have neglected to first establish a reliable knowledge base grounded in a comprehensive, sequential and balanced core curriculum in U.S. history.

NEW MEXICO

(Assessment based on New Mexico Social Studies Standards and Benchmarks, 2001, New Mexico Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

New Mexico

Comprehensive Historical Content: 4

Sequential Development: 4

Balance: 4

F

Total Score: 12 (40 percent)

The goal of the New Mexico standards is to "Establish **clear and high standards**" [emphasis in original] in all academic subjects, to "celebrate the rich and diverse contributions of peoples of many backgrounds and emphasize our shared heritage." Course content at each grade level is reportedly designed to increase "in complexity as students learn and mature. Important topics, texts, and documents are restudied at several grade levels. For example, students have multiple opportunities to study the United States Constitution, each time achieving deeper understanding by reading, writing, and discussing progressively more demanding questions."

The history content standards and benchmarks in the earliest grades focus principally on New Mexico—for example, on changes of governance, "Indigenous, Spanish, Mexican, Texan and American." (Texas, in fact, never "governed" what became the state of New Mexico.) In seventh grade, students discuss the impact of key individuals, groups, and events in New Mexico history from the sixteenth century to the present. By high school, students are expected to "analyze the role and impact of New Mexico and New Mexicans in World War II" (e.g., Native Code Talkers, internment camps and the Manhattan Project). Unfortunately, the content of these topics does not seem to be demonstrably more demanding in the higher grades. Instead of a systematic survey of New Mexico history, the material appears to concentrate on providing a historical check-list that rec-

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ognizes every possible group, or an individual representing every group, in New Mexico's diverse history.

Fifth-grade U.S. history to 1877 (under Content Standard 1 and Benchmark 1-B, which emphasizes major themes, ideas, beliefs, turning points, eras, events, and individuals from the period of exploration and colonization through the Civil War and Reconstruction) is quite detailed on early colonization. It also asks students to explain the significance of major documents from the Mayflower Compact and the Declaration of Independence through the Bill of Rights and the Gettysburg Address. The two key themes in early colonial history, the evolution of both democracy and slavery, are included. Students are expected to discuss how the introduction of slavery "laid a foundation for conflict" and how early "representative government" and "democratic practices" emerged in the colonies as well. As examples of the latter, the New Mexico standards *first* list, in what will become a consistent theme across the grade levels, the "Iroquois Nation model," *followed* by colonial town meetings and assemblies.

Eighth-grade U.S. history, under the same content standard and benchmark (again through Reconstruction), is reasonably comprehensive from the Revolution through the emergence of political parties in the Washington and Adams administrations. However, the topics jump directly from the 1790s to the Age of Jackson, skipping over Jefferson's presidency and the antebellum reform movements (except for abolitionism). Similarly, the material on the political origins of the Civil War is oddly incomplete: New Mexico's standards are among the few to deal explicitly with the critical issue of the extension of slavery into the territories but, at the same time, they never mention the importance of that issue in the dissolution of the Whig party and the formation of the Republican Party. Students are also asked to "compare African American and Native American slavery." In fact, the sporadic attempts to enslave Native Americans in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had essentially ended by the antebellum era.

U.S. history at the high school level, under the "major eras, events and individuals" benchmark for the period since the Civil War and Reconstruction, is quite sketchy and incomplete. Industrialization, technological change, urbanization and immigration are covered, but "the rise and effect of reform movements" never explicitly mentions Theodore Roosevelt (despite references to the muckrakers, a term Teddy Roosevelt invented), Jane Addams, and conservation. Woodrow Wilson is mentioned only in connection with the Treaty of Versailles, and the names of Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt never appear in benchmarks on the Great Depression, the New Deal or World War II. (In addition, the development of Jim Crow laws, *Plessy v. Ferguson* and civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s are unaccountably placed chronologically between the role of the U.S. in World War II and the origins of the Cold War.)

Historical material, at several grade levels, is also scattered through other content standards (geography, civics and government, economics). Eighth-grade civics students, for example, are asked to "Describe the contributions of Native Americans in providing a model that was utilized in forming the United States government (Iroquois Nation)." This objective is not framed as a question for discussion but as an assertion of fact. High school civics students are subsequently asked to "Analyze and explain the philosophical foundations of the American political system in terms of the inalienable rights of people and the purpose of government," by discussing four bullet items. The first, *in oversized bold-faced type*, is the "Iroquois League and its organizational structure for effective governance." The last three bullet items, all in small, regular type, cite the principles of John Locke, Blackstone's writing on the law, Magna Carta, and representative government in England. It is difficult for an historian to decide which is worse in this case: promoting this extremely dubious claim about the influence of the Iroquois League on American democratic institutions or failing to include in this list the origins and growth of indigenous democratic institutions and ideas in colonial America.

New Mexico has failed to provide "clear and high standards" in U.S. history. In addition, despite the confident assertion in the introduction to the standards, only the first part of American history is studied at more than one grade level. Most important, however, in the guise of celebrating diversity, the New Mexico standards have, indefensibly, subjected their students to historical misinformation.

NEW YORK

(Assessment based on Social Studies Resource Guide with Core Curriculum, 1999, The New York State Education Department)

STATE REPORT CARD

New York

Comprehensive Historical Content: 9

Sequential Development: 10

Balance: 9

A

Total Score: 28 (93 percent)

The lengthy New York social studies core curriculum guide, produced after years of political pressure from both left and right, begins by asking: "Who are we as a nation and what are our values and traditions? How did we get to be the way we are? How have we found unity in the midst of our diversity? Which individuals and groups contributed to our development? What are our great achievements as a nation? Where have we failed and what do we need to change?" This cautious and diplomatic language suggests that New York educators are trying to occupy a middle ground in the "history wars"—especially in dealing with the contentious issue of multiculturalism.

The fourth-grade introduction to New York State history, which ends abruptly in the mid-nineteenth century, is comprehensive and balanced. It begins with the ubiquitous three-worlds meet model and devotes particular attention to the history and culture of the Iroquois and Algonquin. Major topics include Dutch, English and French influences in New York, slavery and the slave trade, and the cultural, political and economic characteristics of the colonies. The topics are defined too generally to allow an assessment of actual content, but they do provide teachers with workable guidelines for a core curriculum.

U.S. history in seventh and eighth grades begins with "the global heritage of the American people prior to 1500." A brief section on the Aztecs, Mayans and Incas asks students to compare and contrast their "contributions and accomplishments" and to compare and contrast their religion, government and technology to those of contemporaneous Europe. This exercise in comparative history is entirely reasonable—as long as students also learn that war and extreme brutality were not limited to Europeans.

The section on Iroquois culture, also under the global heritage topic, highlights their religious beliefs, education, family and kinship, government (the Iroquois League), and conceptions of land ownership and use. However, there is not a hint in the curriculum of the warlike and aggressive nature of Iroquois life. Warfare was central to the Iroquois culture and the "mourning war" sometimes included cannibalism. These facts are fully documented in many first-hand narratives by eyewitnesses. The eighteenth-century Iroquois were a remarkable people, but students should also learn that they were not saints.[19]

However, the New York standards discuss Iroquois history and culture without making unfounded claims about the influence of the Iroquois Confederation on the Constitution. The twelfth grade unit on the Constitution does briefly cite "native American governmental systems" after *first* referring to colonial charters, town meetings, and local government but also asserts that students "should understand" that American political rights and institutions are derived from British political traditions, Enlightenment thought, and developments during the colonial period.

The units on European exploration and colonization, the Revolution, the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution and the new nation are exemplary—detailed, thoughtful and balanced. For example, the section on political/social factors leading to the Revolution includes the role of the English Civil War, political freedom in the colonies, the impact of the French and Indian War and the Albany Plan of Union, the political ideas of the Enlightenment, and the emergence of an American identity. There are some problems: the 1734 *Zenger* case is placed after the 1765 Stamp Act; the nineteenth-century concept of "imperialism" cannot really be used to explain the early exploration of the Americas; and the unit on the Revolution fails to adequately consider *why* the colonists reacted so fiercely to British tax-

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ation. Finally, what educational benefit could possibly result from having a student "Write the Gettysburg Address in your own words and memorize part of it?" On the other hand, the section on the drafting, ratification and influence of the 1777 New York State Constitution would be useful as a case study in even the best college U.S. history survey.

Political history, the neglected stepchild in most current American history curricula and state standards, is handled at least adequately in every unit (except for the one on the Gilded Age). However, until mentioning the leadership of Washington in the Revolutionary War, the New York core curriculum almost never mentions the names of real historical people in the entire section on colonial history (although more names do appear in later units).

Nonetheless, the seventh and eighth grade U.S. history core content is consistently comprehensive and balanced from the antebellum period through to the Cold War and modern America. It would be easy to nit-pick particular points: for example, the guide describes the response of Herbert Hoover to the Great Depression as "too little, too late." In fact, Hoover set many precedents for federal and presidential involvement in the economy, which were later copied or expanded by FDR. Nonetheless, New York deserves plaudits for creating a model for substantive, sequential and balanced American history education in the middle school grades.

At the high school level, the New York curriculum recapitulates American history from the colonial era to modern America. The content topics build skillfully on the solid historical foundation laid in the seventh and eighth grades and even the most contentious issues, such as Indian removal during the Jackson administration and the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, are presented evenhandedly.

It would be a banner day for American education reform if all U.S. high school graduates were equipped with the knowledge of their nation's history that is included in the New York core curriculum.

NORTH CAROLINA

(Assessment based on the North Carolina Social Studies Standard Course of Study, 2002, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction)

STATE REPORT CARD

North Carolina

Comprehensive Historical Content: 2

Sequential Development: 1

Balance: 2 (NA)

F

Total Score: 5 (17 percent)

The preface to the new North Carolina standards (scheduled to take effect in 2003-2004) begins by citing the "Essentials of the Social Studies" endorsed by the National Council for the Social Studies. The drafters apparently believe that the most important thing for young people to learn from social studies is how "to solve the problems facing our diverse nation" by fostering "individual and cultural identity" and developing "perspectives on students' own life experiences."

The history component of social studies, however, "can teach both the burdens the past has placed upon us, and the opportunities knowledge of the past can provide." The North Carolina plan claims to cultivate "a sense of order and time" in the elementary grades. By middle school, students should "begin to understand and appreciate differences in historical perspective," and by high school they can "engage in more sophisticated analysis and reconstruction of the past."

Fourth-grade students begin their study of history with an introduction to the origins and early history (up to the American Revolution) of North Carolina. In fifth grade, the curriculum expands to cover the history of the United States and the other countries of North America. The six social studies "Competency Goals" and their subtopic "objectives" are organized around geography and the physical environment, political and social institutions, the roles of various ethnic groups, key

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developments in U.S. history, the allocation and use of economic resources, and the influence of technology.

Most of the objectives, however, are historically and analytically vacuous: e.g., "Recognize how the United States government has changed over time;" "Assess the role of political parties in society;" "Identify examples of cultural interaction within and among the regions of the United States;" or "Compare and contrast the government of the United States with the governments of Canada, Mexico and selected countries of Central America." The history competency goal objective for the colonial period asks students "when, where, why, and how" groups of people settled in different regions of the U.S. From there it jumps to "the contributions of people of diverse cultures throughout the history of the United States," the causes of the American Revolution, the impact of wars and conflicts on U.S. citizens through the war on terrorism, and the "effectiveness of civil rights and social movements throughout United States' [*sic*] history." That's essentially the American history content in the elementary grades in North Carolina.

In eighth grade, students return to North Carolina history. Some of the objectives touch on broader U.S. history ("the impact of the Columbian Exchange," "the factors that led to the founding and settlement of the American colonies," or "the impact of documents" such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights), but the focus is mainly on North Carolina. Typical competency objectives ask students to "Examine the impact of national events" such as the Louisiana Purchase, the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the War with Mexico, the California Gold Rush, and technological advances on North Carolina, or to "Describe the development of the institution of slavery in the State and nation, and assess its impact on the economic, social, and political conditions." North Carolina students enter high school without having had a systematic survey of their nation's history. In addition, these scraps of fifth- and eighth-grade U.S. history are essentially anonymous—no names, no real people.

Eleventh-grade U.S. history, the only American history "survey course" in the North Carolina curriculum, presumably builds on tenth grade civics and economics course that covered, *very generally*, "the development of self-government in British North America," the causes of the Revolution, and the era from the Articles of Confederation to the Constitution. Consequently, the eleventh grade survey begins with the New Nation (1789-1820). In effect, this curriculum decision means that Tarheel State students *never study* the colonial period, the Revolution, or the ratification of the Constitution in a U.S. history course, except for a few random references to the impact of these events on North Carolina history. The "survey course" itself is not a survey at all, but rather a hit-and-miss collection of performance objectives ("Identify," "Analyze," "Assess," "Describe," "Distinguish," "Evaluate") without any chronological integrity, substantive coherence or priorities. Yet somehow North Carolina students will supposedly be equipped to "Distinguish between the economic and social issues that led to sectionalism and nationalism," "Evaluate the impact that settlement in the West had upon different groups of people and the environment," "Trace the economic, social and political events from the Mexican War to the outbreak of the Civil War," "Examine the impact of technological changes on economic, social, and cultural life in the United States," "Describe challenges to traditional practices in religion, race, and gender" [?], and "Summarize the events in foreign policy since the Vietnam War."

Parents and teachers in North Carolina should make every effort to prevent this ineffective scheme from being implemented in 2003-2004. This "social studies standard course of study" is a blueprint for historical ignorance and civic disaffection. If these standards are implemented, the state that sometimes characterizes itself as "a vale of humility between two mountains of conceit" will have, to the detriment of its students, much to be humble about.

NORTH DAKOTA

(Assessment based on Social Studies Standards, 2000; Standards and Benchmarks: Content Standards, Social Studies, 2000, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction)

STATE REPORT CARD

North Dakota

Comprehensive Historical Content: 1

Sequential Development: 1

Balance: 2 (NA)

F

Total Score: 4 (13 percent)

The North Dakota Social Studies Standards were developed "by a diverse team of educators, kindergarten through higher education, during 1997-1999." They are designed "to provide a framework from which teachers of North Dakota can design their social studies curriculum." The document is organized around nine content standards (defined as "general statements that describe what students should know and the skills they should have in a specific content area"): "Nature and Scope of History," "Political Institutions," "Economic systems," "Social Studies Resources," "Role of the Citizen," "Geography," "Culture," "Sociology and Psychology," and "Sovereignty" (relating to the tribal nations of North Dakota).

The "examples of specific knowledge" in U.S. history in the fourth grade, under Content Standard 1, "Nature and Scope of History," must be quoted in their entirety to reveal their crippling weaknesses: "Historical events such as the Declaration of Independence, influence of the Iroquois Confederacy on representative government, Mayflower, Revolutionary War (e.g., treaties with tribal governments, Paul Revere, Boston Tea Party, 13 Colonies), inventors (e.g., Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, Eli Whitney), Civil War (e.g., Battle of Gettysburg and Gettysburg Address, Emancipation Proclamation, state's rights, freedom trains [?]), changes in methods of transportation and communication, symbols of democracy, folklore and cultural contributions to national heritage." The standards don't even attempt to explain how this muddle of random, chronologically jumbled, and even erroneous historical references (e.g., the Iroquois influence on representative government) could possibly provide a framework from which social studies teachers can create a workable history curriculum.

The U.S. history content required for North Dakota students in grades 5-8 is equally nebulous. Examples of "specific knowledge" include: "Settlement patterns; Native groups; explorers; role of immigrants; role of railroads; role of political parties and state government." In addition, the list of eras in American history is substantively useless (e.g., "Industrial Revolution, Scientific Revolution, Civil War, Reconstruction Era, immigration, civil rights").

The specific core of knowledge in North Dakota's high school U.S. history is just as chaotic, random and content-free: "Sectionalism, nationalism, revolution, conflicts and foreign policies, isolationism, internationalism, Native American groups, exploration, colonization, Revolutionary Era, Development of Constitution, Early Republic Era, Jacksonian Democracy, Westward Expansion, [Civil War?], Reconstruction, industrialization, emergence of modern America, Populism, Progressivism, America's wars, the Great Depression, Cold War, Post Cold War Era, minority rights, population diversity, racism."

Teachers and parents in North Dakota should make clear to the Department of Public Instruction in Bismarck that these "content standards" in U.S. history contain virtually no content, no standards, and no evidence of sequential learning. Perhaps they should begin by asking a specific, substantive question: How can this document be taken seriously when the "examples of specific knowledge [see above] that support the standards" in high school American history include Reconstruction but skip over the Civil War?

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OHIO

(Assessment based on Ohio's Social Studies Academic Content Standards, 2002, Ohio Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Ohio

Comprehensive Historical Content: 7

Sequential Development: 4

Balance: 7

D

Total Score: **18 (60 percent)**

The new Ohio Social Studies Academic Content Standards, more than 300 pages in length, were drafted by a team of teachers, parents, college faculty and business leaders over several years. Just over half of the social studies writing team were K-12 educators. The goal of these standards is to provide "rigorous progression across grades and in-depth study within grades." Ohio's standards were also "reviewed by national experts who examined the content, developmental appropriateness, and curricular considerations of the standards. Overall, the reviewers found Ohio's standards to be clear and comprehensive, setting high expectations for student learning."

The Ohio standards, reflecting the most conventional social studies model, are divided into six Content Standards: History, People in Societies, Geography, Economics, Government and Citizenship Rights, and Responsibilities. Ohio history is introduced in fourth grade. Students move on to "Regions and Peoples of North America" in fifth grade, but the standards explain that "The concentration is geographic rather than historic [*sic*]." Students at least touch on the settlement of the continent by American Indians, European exploration and colonization, how the U.S. became independent from England, African Americans under the institution of slavery, and early nineteenth-century westward expansion. Students are also expected to compare the *perspectives* of various *cultural* groups [emphasis in original]: African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, Appalachians [?], European Americans, French Canadians and Latinos/Latinas, including Mexicans and Puerto Ricans. These 10-year-old children are learning that perspective is principally determined by group and ethnic identity—the inverse of *e pluribus unum*. In any case, Ohio's children apparently leave elementary school without a coherent introduction to American history.

The standards nonetheless declare that "The historical sequence continues in the eighth grade with an in-depth study of the early years of our country." The History Standard grade-level indicators on the colonial period cover regional differences, relations with American Indians, the growth of representative government and democratic values, and the origins and institutionalization of slavery—"including the slave trade in Africa." (A subsequent indicator, in the Peoples in Societies Standard, refers to "the forced relocation and enslavement of Africans" without specifically mentioning the African side of the slavery equation.) Students are also asked to "Explain the historic [*sic*] limitations on the participation of women in American society." One hopes Ohio teachers will also examine the status of women's rights in other societies in the same period and discuss the dramatic changes in the status of American women since the 18th century. The remaining grade-level indicators on the Revolution, the writing of the Constitution, the new nation, westward expansion, and the Civil War and Reconstruction, are reasonably complete. The emphasis on the territorial expansion of slavery as a principal cause of the Civil War is especially noteworthy.

However, serious gaps remain: the creation of political parties in the 1790s is included, but Jefferson and the election of 1800 are absent; the third president is not even mentioned in connection with the Louisiana Purchase or the Lewis and Clark expedition. Similarly, the social reform movements of the antebellum era are covered, but Jacksonian political democracy and the formation of the Republican Party (over the slavery extension issue) are left out. Jefferson and Jackson surface later in connection with slavery and Indian removal (in a grade-level indicator on Citizenship Rights and Responsibilities) but not in their crucial political contexts—highlighting the inherent historical incoherence of social studies methodology for history education.

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Tenth graders complete the only chronological study of U.S. history in the Ohio K-12 standards. The grade-level indicators are generally comprehensive and balanced from the end of Reconstruction through the end of the Cold War—although Theodore Roosevelt is never mentioned in relation to Progressive reforms and Franklin Roosevelt is missing from discussions of the New Deal and World War II.

Ohio educators should consider how the social studies organization itself undermines historical coherence. For example, the legalization of Jim Crow laws and the struggle for racial equality appear in the "People in Societies" Standard under "Patterns of Social Interaction," but *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the landmark 1896 Supreme Court decision institutionalizing racial segregation with its 'separate but equal' reasoning, is discussed in the "Government" Standard under "Rules and Laws" (along with the much later *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Bakke* decisions). African American migration to the North, the post-World War I race riots, and civil rights during World War II and in the Martin Luther King, Jr. era appear in the "History" Standard under the "United States in the 20th Century Citizenship." However, civil rights also appears in the "Citizenship Rights" Standard under "Participation," and the origins of the NAACP is placed in the "People and Societies" Standard under "Cultural Perspectives" (along with the much later National Association for Women, American Indian Movement and United Farm Workers). The drama and interconnections of real human history simply cannot be communicated effectively by so fragmented a framework, and students may be justifiably confused and bored when history is squeezed, not very convincingly, into such abstract and synthetic categories.

Ohio's teachers, parents and students have good reason to be pleased by the substantive progress in U.S. history since their first state standards a decade ago. Is it too much to hope that they may yet take the crucial step and liberate history entirely from social studies?

OKLAHOMA

(Assessment based on Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills, 2002, Oklahoma State Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Oklahoma

Comprehensive Historical Content: 7

Sequential Development: 8

Balance: 10

B

Total Score: **25 (83 percent)**

The principal purpose of social studies, the new Oklahoma Priority Academic Student Skills framework asserts, is to help students develop the ability "to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world." The standards acknowledge that social studies, consisting of five core content subjects (history, geography, civics, economics and government), "may be difficult to define, because it is at once multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary." The Oklahoma standards also suggest that knowledge should not be separated from skills if students are "to be able to assume 'the office of citizen' as Thomas Jefferson called it."

Students touch on biographies of "interesting Americans" in the earliest grades before exploring Oklahoma history in the fourth grade. United States history (through 1850) begins in grade 5 with an introduction to the growth and development of colonial America. The coverage of colonial history is detailed but does not specifically explain either the development of democratic institutions and values or the establishment of slavery (although slavery is mentioned several times). The material on the Revolution, the Constitution, and the new nation is likewise thorough and, most importantly, includes the contributions of real individuals by name. There are, however, significant gaps; for instance, the rise of political parties in the 1790s and the election of 1800 are not mentioned. As a result, the jump to Andrew Jackson and the politics of the common man

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lacks a political context. Also, Jefferson is not explicitly mentioned in connection with the Louisiana Purchase or the Lewis and Clark expedition. The topic on the social reform movements of the early nineteenth century includes only women's suffrage and abolitionism.

Eighth-grade U.S. history covers the period from the Revolution through Reconstruction. This curriculuar decision means that Oklahoma's American history sequence covers colonial history only once, at the introductory level in the fifth grade, a serious omission. On the other hand, the quarter century from the Revolution through 1800 is studied for the second time, and in greater depth and detail. Indeed, the political, ideological, economic, and social history in this section is exemplary—and as balanced and challenging as any middle school American history curriculum in any of the state standards.

Similarly, the material on the period after 1801 is remarkably complete and demands real historical sophistication and substantive knowledge from Oklahoma history teachers. Most striking, students are exposed to all sides of key issues and are never directed to come to a particular conclusion. Even on the most contentious issues, the material is presented analytically and dispassionately: for example, "Assess the economic, political and social aspects of slavery [and] the variety of slave experiences;" "Analyze changing ideas about race and assess pro-slavery and anti-slavery ideologies in the North and the South;" "Explain the provisions of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments and the political forces supporting and opposing each;" "Analyze how and why the Compromise of 1877 effectively ended Reconstruction." Almost unique among state standards, Oklahoma even asks eighth graders to "Discuss the impact of the presidential election of 1860, including the issues, personalities and results."

Oklahoma's high school U.S. history sequence, 1850 to the present, gives students a second opportunity to study the crucial period from the coming of the Civil War through the end of Reconstruction. The discussion of industrialization, immigration, urbanization and reform, however, is not up to the standard of the eighth-grade survey. The material is still generally balanced: "Compare and contrast the attitudes toward Native American groups as exhibited by federal Indian policy (e.g., establishment of reservations, assimilation, and the Dawes Act) and actions of the United States Army, missionaries, and settlers. Unfortunately, the high school curriculum is far less comprehensive and more anonymous. Political history is skipped entirely after 1876, and Populism is not mentioned as one of the late nineteenth-century reform movements (nor is William Jennings Bryan, the first presidential candidate to carry the new state of Oklahoma in 1908). Progressivism is also anonymous—no Robert LaFollette or Theodore Roosevelt (except for "Big Stick Diplomacy"), and no Woodrow Wilson (even for World War I and the League of Nations). This decline in historical comprehensiveness is especially apparent in the material on the 1920s, the Great Depression and the New Deal (the latter does not mention a single example of a New Deal initiative or reform).

Very few major figures are identified for study: no Herbert Hoover or FDR for the Great Depression; no Harry Truman (except for the "Truman Doctrine") for the Cold War; no LBJ for the war in Vietnam; no Richard Nixon for Watergate; and no Ronald Reagan for Iran-Contra. Indeed, the reference to TR cited above is the only time a president is named since Lincoln until FDR is listed as merely one of the "key individuals" of the era of the Depression and the New Deal (along with Eleanor Roosevelt, Charles Lindbergh and two Oklahoma natives, Will Rogers and Woody Guthrie). Historical content is sketchy, at best: the internment of Japanese-Americans is the only event cited on the home front during World War II; the section on the origins of the Cold War does not include the Marshall Plan; the topic on the postwar "fear of communist influence within the United States" should mention declassified Soviet documents which prove that the threat was not imaginary. The subtopic on the civil rights movements of the 1950s and the 1960s never refers to Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Eisenhower administration is entirely ignored. One subtopic, however, does ask students to identify U.S. presidents, civil rights leaders and political activists.

In summary, Oklahoma's eighth-grade American history curriculum is often exceptional both for content and balance. If the elementary and, especially, the high school segments of the sequence are raised to the same high standard, Oklahoma would rank among the very best states in U.S. history education.

OREGON

(Assessment based on Oregon's Teaching and Learning to Standards: Social Sciences, 2002, Oregon Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Oregon

Comprehensive Historical Content: 6

Sequential Development: 5

Balance: 5

D

Total Score: **16 (53 percent)**

Oregon joins Massachusetts as one of very few states to classify history as a social science (along with civics, economics and geography) rather than as a component of social studies. However, unlike Massachusetts, the Oregon U.S. history sequence does not repeat the study of any time period at a higher grade level: the pre-Columbian era through the American Revolution is studied in fifth grade; the post Revolutionary era through 1900 is covered in eighth grade; and the twentieth century is discussed in tenth grade. This approach has several flaws: first, students never recapitulate any portion of U.S. history after they have presumably reached a more sophisticated level of understanding; second, the colonial period is studied only in fifth grade, when students are too young to deal adequately with some of the more challenging aspects of early American history, such as the emerging tension between democracy and slavery in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Can 10-year-old children, for example, *fully* grasp the contradictions and ambiguities in Thomas Jefferson's ambivalent and life-long personal struggle over slavery?

Oregon has adapted the conventional nine eras used in two influential publications of the National Center for History in the Schools (*Lessons from History*, 1992, and *National Standards for United States History*, 1994). These begin with Three Worlds Meet (Beginnings to 1620) and conclude with the Post-war United States (1945-1970s). Within those chronological categories, however, the explicit content is often fragmentary and hard to pin down. Fifth-grade students study pre-Columbian societies, "their ways of life, and the empires they developed" [elusive language that suggests sanitized content in the classroom], the impact of European exploration "on Native Americans and on the land," how the colonial experience "led to the American Revolution," and the impact of significant individuals (e.g., George Washington, Samuel Adams, and Thomas Jefferson) and ideas through the Revolutionary era. Since Oregon students will never again study the colonial era or the Revolution, this limited content seems barely adequate.

Eighth-grade U.S. history, which begins with "the issues and events that were addressed at the Constitutional Convention," moves on to Westward expansion apparently without any discussion of political events from 1789 to 1800. Indeed, the political history of the new nation is skipped entirely except for "the effects of Jacksonian Democracy on political practices." Students examine the conditions of the African slave trade, the Middle Passage, and "the experiences of enslaved African Americans." But as is so often the case in state history standards, there is no hint about how these Africans were first enslaved *before* they endured the Middle Passage. On the coming of the Civil War, students examine the decisive role of the extension of slavery into the territories, the political crises that began with the 1820 Missouri Compromise and the "breakup of the Democratic Party and the emergence of the Republican Party." In fact, the Democrats split into sectional factions in 1860; it was the Whigs not the Democrats that actually broke up in the 1850s. Students are also expected to "Understand how Reconstruction affected the country" and how the condition of African Americans deteriorated after the emergence of Black Codes and Jim Crow laws.

The Oregon curriculum is sometimes subtly tendentious, highlighting persistent injustices against Native Americans, African Americans, immigrants, women and unskilled laborers and, for example, directing students to fault late nineteenth-century factory owners for "accumulation of great wealth, often at the expense of others." On the other hand, the curriculum all but

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ignores the other side of the coin of the American democratic experience—the origins and expansion of the commitment to democracy, freedom and inclusion.

Oregon's tenth-grade U.S. survey starts with the Progressive era but fails to include Populism or many other key political and social developments in post-Reconstruction America. The unit on Progressivism addresses the concerns, successes, and limitations (especially racism) of Progressive reforms and reformers without actually mentioning a single concept, event or individual from local, state or national progressivism. World War I is skipped completely (although it is covered in World History) and the survey goes directly to the 1920s and the coming of the Great Depression and New Deal. The curriculum includes FDR's measures for relief, recovery, and reform, as well as the redefinition of the role of the federal government and the "legacy of programs still in existence today," without citing any examples of New Deal initiatives (except for two acronyms: FDIC and FICA).

Oregon's once-over-lightly U.S. history curriculum is based on a questionable assumption: that students will remember fifth-grade U.S. history in the eighth grade, as well as fifth and eighth grade American history in the tenth grade. Oregon's history survey is, in places, reasonably detailed and specific. But the gaps are significant, and the curriculum is spotty at best and chronologically incoherent at worst.

PENNSYLVANIA

(Assessment based on Academic Standards for History, 2002, Pennsylvania Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Pennsylvania

Comprehensive Historical Content: 1

Sequential Development: 1

Balance: 2 (NA)

F

Total Score: 4 (13 percent)

History, the Pennsylvania standards assert, "is a narrative—a story. In order to tell the story it is not sufficient to simply recall facts; it is also necessary to understand the context of the time and place and to apply historical thinking skills." The standards also explain that the level of historical content and "the degree of comprehension" should become more sophisticated as the student moves up through the grades. Pennsylvania and U.S. history, presumably reflecting these priorities, are presented in the following progression: beginnings to the present (grades 1-3); beginnings to 1824 (grades 4-6); 1787-1914 (grades 7-9); and 1890-Present (grades 10-12).

In effect, this sequence means that Pennsylvania students will only study colonial history in elementary school. However, since the Pennsylvania curriculum actually lacks any narrative, any stories or any chronological sense of time, place, or context, this oversight hardly seems to make much difference. Instead of focusing on real history, the standards divide Pennsylvania and U.S. history into some twenty elusive (and often overlapping) categories: Inhabitants; Political Leaders; Cultural and Commercial Leaders; Innovators and Reformers; Documents, Writings and Oral Traditions; Artifacts, Architecture and Historic Places; Belief Systems and Religions; Commerce and Industry; Innovations; Politics; Settlement Patterns and Expansion; Social Organization; Transportation; Women's Movement; Domestic Instability; Ethnic and Racial Relations, Labor Relations; Immigration and Migration; and Military Conflicts.

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If these categories are thought of as twenty empty boxes arranged on a table, this scheme actually operates much like a mail sorting room. The standards, in effect, simply and arbitrarily deposit historical events, people, movements, ideas, etc., into one applicable box (and not necessarily the most applicable one). For example, in grade 9, students are asked to "Identify and analyze the political and cultural contributions of individuals and groups to United States history from 1787 to 1914." Four bullet points follow: Political Leaders (e.g., Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson); Military Leaders (e.g., Andrew Jackson, Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant); Cultural and Commercial Leaders (e.g., Jane Addams, Jacob Riis, Booker T. Washington); and Innovators and Reformers (e.g., Alexander Graham Bell, Frances E. Willard, Frederick Douglass). The standards do not explain why Jackson and Grant, both American presidents, should not be classified as political leaders, why Jane Addams should not be thought of as a reformer, or why Frederick Douglass should not be described as a political leader. This task is later applied verbatim to grade 12—for the period from 1890 to the present. The military leaders listed this time around are John Pershing, Douglas MacArthur, and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Again, the standards do not provide any explanation for why another two-term president should not be classified as a political leader.

Similar procedures are repeated throughout the remainder of the standards, asking students to consider small thematic groupings of almost random people and events from extensive periods of time. The only variation is in the historical dates covered at the particular grade level. It would be impossible to differentiate among these identical tasks in the various grades were it not for that one difference—so much for increasing the level of content to reflect changing student comprehension. These categories have no chronological structure and are historically and educationally vacuous—unless their purpose is to guarantee that young people will be bored to tears by history. (The Pennsylvania standards, incidentally, are the only state standards ever to mention the thirtieth president, Calvin Coolidge, ironically by citing a bogus quotation, "The business of America is business," which has even been dropped from *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*.)[30]

Pennsylvania's standards do not make sufficient use of the keystone they set up in the introduction. Instead, the Commonwealth's idiosyncratic scheme drains everything historical from the study of history—it lacks chronology, vitality, and drama, and it fails to establish real connections among people, ideas, and events. Above all, the authors of the Pennsylvania standards have abrogated the responsibility to set priorities and establish a coherent core of essential knowledge in our national history. Instead, they have created a peculiarly ineffectual version of "Trivial Pursuit." Students and parents in Pennsylvania deserve better—and should say so loudly and clearly.

RHODE ISLAND

Perhaps relishing the state's historic identity as a haven for mavericks, dissidents, and naysayers, the Rhode Island Department of Education decided a few years ago against developing statewide frameworks in social studies (although they have frameworks in English/language arts, math and science). The refuge for Massachusetts Bay outcasts Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson, the first colony to declare independence from England, and the last of the original thirteen states to ratify the U.S. Constitution, instead offers a lengthy Standards-Based Guide for Social Studies in Rhode Island on their Web site. [http://www.ridoe.net/standards/frameworks/social_studies] Rhode Island, nonetheless, has neither statewide standards nor assessment in social studies.

SOUTH CAROLINA

(Assessment based on South Carolina Social Studies Curriculum Standards, 2000, South Carolina Department of Education) (South Carolina is currently revising its standards.)

STATE REPORT CARD

South Carolina

Comprehensive Historical Content: 6

Sequential Development: 7

Balance: 7

C

Total Score: 20 (67 percent)

The South Carolina Social Studies Curriculum Standards assert that social studies "should help students understand and appreciate what America has accomplished." But students must also "look at all sides of issues" and explore "the impact of racism, sexism, and classism [*sic*] both here *and abroad*" [emphasis added]. The latter would indeed be an eye-opener for students and many teachers. They would learn about sexism in many Muslim societies, not to mention slavery, and racism in nations as different as Japan, China, Switzerland, and the U.K.

The framework initially identifies social studies process standards (the skills required to address what students should be able to do) followed by content standards (what students are expected to know). The process standards for history include chronological thinking and historical comprehension, analysis, interpretation, research capabilities, and decision-making. However, the framework tries to mitigate the impact of this artificial distinction between process and content by claiming that "the process standards are embedded in the content standards, so teachers should incorporate them into their teaching and assessment of the content standards."

South Carolina introduces third graders to a very general history of their state by discussing indigenous peoples, explorers, the lives of Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans in colonial South Carolina, the impact of the Revolutionary war, the development of slavery, the different lifestyles of people in South Carolina during the antebellum period, and the events and results of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Fourth-grade students also study the period from the colonial era through Reconstruction, focusing instead on the larger national picture. South Carolina adopts parts of the curriculum from the framework proposed by the National Center for History in the Schools, such as contrasting the experiences of "voluntary" and "involuntary" settlers. The chronology and content are generally adequate for introducing U.S. history to 9-year-olds. But these young students are somewhat unrealistically expected to identify the major events and notable figures in the Revolutionary era, explain the significance of the Constitution and the roles of its key framers, and discuss the causes, course, and effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Fifth-grade U.S. history, from 1877 to the present (under "Time, Continuity, and Change"), emphasizes the various ethnic and cultural groups involved in westward expansion, cultural diversity in late nineteenth-century immigration and the treatment of the "Native American nations" by the U.S. government after the Civil War. Industrialization and the American labor movement are discussed, but the era of reform from Populism to Progressivism is skipped entirely. Students also jump directly from World War I to the Great Depression, the New Deal, and World War II. In addition, the South Carolina framework for third through fifth grades never mentions an actual American historical figure. (John C. Calhoun, for example, is notably absent.)

In eighth grade, students recapitulate U.S. and South Carolina history from the earliest settlements to the end of the nineteenth century. The topical outline is somewhat more complex than in earlier grades: it includes how South Carolina and other colonies became dependent on slavery, political developments from the early presidential administrations through the 1850s, antebellum social reform movements, sectional tensions resulting from westward expansion, the forced removal of Native Americans, the rise of opposition to slavery, post-Civil War industrialization, immigration and urbanization, the women's suffrage movement, the post-Civil War "decimation of Native American cul-

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ture," the emergence of Populism, and "American imperialism." Notably missing are any discussion of the origins of democratic institutions and ideas in the colonial period, the racial dimension of the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Compromise of 1877, the New South, the restoration of white supremacy, the KKK, Jim Crow, *Plessy v. Ferguson*, tenant farming, sharecropping, and the disenfranchisement of black voters. And once again, South Carolina's otherwise reasonably detailed U.S. history curriculum remains anonymous—no real people are mentioned.

U.S. and South Carolina studies end in the eleventh to twelfth grades with a final review of the period since 1877. Again, the crucial history of the South from Reconstruction to the early twentieth century is absent. Students are asked to "describe how new social patterns, conflicts, and ideas of national unity developed amid growing cultural diversity"—a rather evasive reference to the injustices and tensions in the emergence of modern America and the New South. This time around, however, unlike the fifth-grade U.S. survey, Progressivism and the 1920s are included.

South Carolina has clearly made a commitment to provide students with a substantive and cumulatively developed U.S. history sequence. But it meets that commitment only episodically. Important and controversial issues are airbrushed by resorting to the recurrent diversity theme, e.g., "describe diversity in the United States and its benefits and challenges" (fifth grade), "explain the many forms of diversity in American society and why conflicts have arisen from diversity; and assess the ways conflicts about diversity can be resolved in a peaceful manner that respects individual rights and promotes the common good" (eleventh-twelfth grades). The curriculum would be significantly enhanced by including specific people and events and looking more unflinchingly at American and South Carolina history from Jim Crow to the civil rights revolution of the mid-twentieth century.

SOUTH DAKOTA

(Assessment based on South Dakota Social Studies Content Standards, 1999, South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs)

STATE REPORT CARD

South Dakota

Comprehensive Historical Content: 6

Sequential Development: 5

Balance: 7

D

Total Score: **18 (60 percent)**

The South Dakota standards affirm that social studies helps students "understand their roots, see their connections to the past, [and] comprehend their context." "History should be the integrative core of the [social studies] curriculum," they assert, adopting the words of the 1995 Virginia standards. "It enables both the humanities (such as art and literature) and the social sciences (political science, economics and geography) to come to life."

South Dakota students begin the study of history in first grade with an introduction to national holidays and the biographies and stories of Americans such as Franklin, Washington, Lincoln, Clara Barton, Helen Keller and Martin Luther King, Jr. In third grade, they discuss the exploration and settlement of the United States; in fourth grade they delve into the history of South Dakota. United States history gets underway in fifth grade. The topics on the founding, settlement and regional differentiation of the colonies unfortunately skip *both* the development of democratic institutions and values and the origins of slavery. The standards do cite Magna Carta and the English Bill of Rights as sources for colonial convictions about representative government, but never refer explicitly to democratic traditions that developed in the colonies themselves. Students also need a more detailed explanation for the break with England. The remaining material through the Civil War is adequate for fifth graders, but political

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history is left out completely, and after the Revolution there are no names of real historical people.

Eighth-grade U.S. history, which covers the period from the Revolution to the end of World War I, is unusually comprehensive (South Dakota students, regrettably, do not study the colonial period again after the fifth grade). In the discussion of the Constitution, for example, students explore the contrasting views of the Federalists and Anti-Federalists and the drafting of the Bill of Rights. The emergence of political parties in the 1790s is also included, but Jefferson's election, Jacksonian democracy, antebellum social reform movements, and the political conflicts leading to the Civil War are skipped entirely. For post-Civil War America there are several gaps: Populism is missing from the reference to reform movements, and Progressivism is named but neither defined nor explained.

The South Dakota U.S. history sequence continues in ninth grade with a recapitulation of post-Civil War industrialization, immigration, urbanization, and the emergence of the Progressive movement. Populism is again omitted, which is especially striking because William Jennings Bryan narrowly carried South Dakota in 1896. Indeed, the ninth-grade topics are extremely sketchy and substantially less coherent than the eighth-grade curriculum. Political history is missing again, the New Deal is cited in one sentence (with no details), and anonymity still prevails. The grade 9-12 U.S. history standards do not mention an American president or major historical figure (except where unavoidable: e.g., McCarthyism, Reaganomics, the Warren Court, and the Thomas/Bork nominations).

The South Dakota content standards include some reliable and substantive United States history, especially in eighth grade. However, the entire sequence needs to be refined and clarified, especially at the high school level.

TENNESSEE

(Assessment based on Tennessee Social Studies Curriculum Standards, 2001, Tennessee State Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Tennessee

Comprehensive Historical Content: 6

Sequential Development: 8

Balance: 8

C

Total Score: 22 (73 percent)

The Tennessee Social Studies Curriculum Standards, more than 200 pages long, were updated in 2001 by a revision committee "consisting of K-12 Social Studies teachers, state department personnel, and higher education representatives" using "the current Tennessee standards, the ten National Council for the Social Studies standards, curriculum guides from other states and current educational research."[21]

Tennessee begins U.S. history in fourth grade with a survey from the earliest settlements to the outbreak of the Civil War. The topics, which begin with the ubiquitous Three Worlds Meet (Beginnings to 1620), also include Colonization and Settlement (1585-1763), Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1820), and Expansion and Reform (1801-1861). Students are expected to identify pre-colonial inhabitants, early explorers and settlers and "Recognize the role desire for freedom played in the settlement of the New World." (This theme is clearly relevant to the thirteen English colonies but rather hard to pin down among Spanish and Portuguese explorers and settlers in Central and South America.) The curriculum then jumps directly to the "causes and results of the American Revolution" without exploring the development of democratic institutions, values and ideas in the colonies or even mentioning the origins of slavery. The antebellum period is summed up by a reference to conflict with Native Americans, the expansion of slavery, and "emerging industrialization."

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Grade 5 students continue the U.S. history survey from the Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877) through the Contemporary United States (1968-present). The listed expectations for learning amount to little more than a restatement of chronological topic headings: for example, "Understand the causes, course and consequences of the Civil War," "Understand the changing role of the United States between World War I and the Great Depression [in what?]," and "Understand how the Cold War influenced domestic and international politics." The learning performance indicators, however, are more specific, citing sectional differences between the North and the South, key Civil War leaders, the post-war struggles of organized labor, the hardships encountered by settlers, and the civil rights movement after the 1954 *Brown* decision.

In eighth grade, the Tennessee U.S. history sequence revisits the period from Three Worlds Meet through the Civil War and Reconstruction. This time around, the topics are far more substantive. Students consider "the limits on individual freedom," "the lives of free and indentured immigrants," and "the social, cultural, and political events that shaped African slavery in colonial America." At the same time, they explore the influence of European philosophers on "participatory government" and on challenges to "inherited ideas of hierarchy" and "the growth of representative government" in the colonies. Similarly, the topics on the new nation are generally comprehensive if sometimes disjointed: the Continental Congress is listed for discussion *after* the creation of the Articles of Confederation and Shay's [*sic*] Rebellion is listed *after* the Bill of Rights. Political history, as is so often the case in state standards, is largely ignored: the origins of political parties in the 1790s are included, but Jefferson's election in 1800 and Jacksonian democracy are missing (despite references to antebellum reform movements and benchmarks on the development and effects of political parties up to the Civil War).

The Tennessee U.S. history sequence concludes with an eleventh-grade survey from the Industrial Development of the United States (1870-1890) through the Contemporary United States (1968-Present)—much the same period studied in fifth grade. The learning and performance expectations touch on Social Darwinism, the economic disparity among farmers, workers and industrial capitalists, partisan politics and corruption, the origins of Populism, the Indian wars, and the new immigration. However, although the contrast in philosophies of black leaders (presumably W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington) and the later Harlem Renaissance is mentioned, the crucial development of Jim Crow in the South is not explicitly explored.

Tennessee educators seem committed to teaching American history at a high level of content and sophistication, but they fall short by failing to identify clearly the priority historical knowledge required for a grade-by-grade core curriculum in U.S. history. Once they have taken that essential step, the Tennessee Social Studies Curriculum Standards will merit the full support of the state's teachers, parents and students.

TEXAS

(Assessment based on Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Kindergarten-Grade 12: Social Studies and Economics, 1997, Texas Education Agency)

STATE REPORT CARD

Texas

Comprehensive Historical Content: 7

Sequential Development: 10

Balance: 4

C

Total Score: 21 (70 percent)

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Kindergarten-Grade 12: Social Studies and Economics, often referred to as TEKS, forthrightly affirms that a solid foundation in social studies (history, geography, economics, government, and citizenship) "enables students to understand the importance of patriotism, function in a free enterprise society, and appreciate the basic values of our state and nation."

Texas begins to build this foundation in K-3 by introducing the concept of chronological order, identifying "people who helped to shape our state and nation"

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(such as Stephen Austin, Sam Houston, Washington, Lincoln, "and historical figures such as Amelia Earhart and Robert Fulton who have exhibited a love of individualism and inventiveness"), explaining holidays (such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Independence Day) and the significance of state and national landmarks. Students also "learn the purpose of rules and the role of authority figures in the home and school," become familiar with the beliefs and principles that contribute to American national identity, and "learn about the lives of heroic men and women who made important choices, overcame obstacles, sacrificed for the betterment of others, and embarked on journeys that resulted in new ideas, new inventions, and new communities."

In grade 4, students move on to the history of Texas "from the early beginnings to the present within the context of influences of the Western Hemisphere," highlighting Native American origins, Spanish and Mexican rule, the Texas Revolution [of 1836], the Mexican War, the Civil War and Reconstruction, and the development of modern oil, gas and aerospace industries. Students also "recite and explain the meaning of the Pledge to the Texas Flag" and discuss "the contributions of people of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups to Texas." In addition, under fourth-grade Economics, students are expected to "describe the development of the free enterprise system in Texas," "describe how the free enterprise system works in Texas; and give examples of the benefits of the free enterprise system in Texas." Students are also asked to "explain the impact of American ideas about progress and equality of opportunity on the economic development and growth of Texas."

Grade 5 students tackle a very general introduction to American history from the colonial era through the twentieth century, including "the roots of representative government in this nation as well as the important ideas in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution." The substantive historical details include: when and why people colonized North America, the contributions of colonial leaders, the origins and results of the Revolution, the events that led to the Constitution, the [early] industrial revolution, westward expansion, the Civil War and Reconstruction, postwar urbanization and industrialization and "world wars, and the Great Depression." Students are also expected to "Identify the challenges, opportunities and contributions of people from selected Native American and immigrant groups." However, even though the grade-five survey delves into the reasons for the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, the origins and development of slavery are never mentioned in the K-5 Texas/U.S. history sequence. (Even the word "slavery" does not appear.) Likewise Jacksonian democracy and antebellum reform movements are skipped (though they are included later in eighth grade). In addition, borrowing nearly verbatim from fourth-grade Texas history, students are asked to describe "the development of the free enterprise system in colonial America and the United States," "describe how the free enterprise system works in the United States," and to "give examples of the benefits of the free enterprise system in the United States."

Texas history is revisited in grade 7 but, TEKS asserts, "Content is presented with more depth and breadth than in grade 4." Students are also expected to "use primary and secondary sources to examine the rich and diverse cultural background of Texas as they identify the different racial and ethnic groups that settled Texas." The content is indeed detailed, particularly on Texas political history leading to independence and statehood. But, despite asking students to "analyze the causes of and events leading to Texas statehood" and to "explain reasons for the involvement of Texas in the Civil War," TEKS, as in the K-5 sequence, never explicitly mentions the role of slavery in early Texas history (especially in the controversy over statehood and in the 1844 election). After covering Reconstruction in Texas, the seventh-grade history content becomes far sketchier, referring very generally to expansion of the Texas frontier, development of the cattle and oil industries, the growth of railroads and reform movements such as Progressivism. Populism is not mentioned despite the fact that Texas was a leading Populist state. The civil rights movement of the mid-twentieth century is discussed, but oddly without historical context since the development of Jim Crow in late nineteenth-century Texas and the South is not included.

Eighth-grade United States history, from the early colonial era through Reconstruction, "builds upon" the fifth-grade survey "but provides more depth and

breadth." The content is particularly strong on the growth of representative government during the colonial era (although this key development is never linked directly to the origins of the Revolution) and on political events from the 1790s through the antebellum period. A good deal of solid historical content is also included in the Economics, Government, and Citizenship sections of the eighth-grade social studies survey. Students are asked, in discussing the Civil War, to review "the effects of political, economic, and social factors on slaves and free blacks" and to "analyze the impact of slavery on different sections of the United States." This appears to be the first use of the words "slaves" and "slavery" in the K-8 Texas/U.S. history sequence. The Economics section also requires students to "explain reasons for the development of the plantation system, the growth of the slave trade, and the spread of slavery" and, rather paradoxically, to also "describe the characteristics and the benefits of the U.S. free enterprise system during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries."

Students complete the Texas/U.S. history sequence in high school with a full-year survey on American history since Reconstruction. Political and social history in the quarter century after 1877 is covered in reasonable detail (including Indian policies, industrialization, urbanization, immigration, the expansion of railroads, the growth of political machines, civil service reform, the development of labor unions, and farm issues). But Populism is not mentioned again, nor are crucial issues such as restoration of white supremacy, the rise of the KKK, the disenfranchisement of black voters and the spread of Jim Crow sanctioned in 1896 by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The impact of the Progressive Era is inaccurately placed after Wilson's Fourteen Points and the Treaty of Versailles, and Theodore Roosevelt's progressive agenda and record are not discussed at all. (The Rough Riders, many of whom were Texans, would not be amused.) The history sequence also skips directly from the 1920s to World War II; however, the Great Depression and New Deal are covered under Economics, and FDR's effort to "pack" the Supreme Court is included under Government. Similarly, the civil rights movement and the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., culminating in the 1964 Civil Rights Act, are discussed under History, but *Brown v. Board of Education* appears under Government—such is the bizarre historical logic of social studies.

A political agenda is clearly evident throughout the TEKS. The history of America, and especially of Texas itself, is not merely celebrated, but glorified. Important facts, such as the central role of slavery and southern political power in the movement for Texas statehood, or the rise of Jim Crow and the KKK after Reconstruction, are evaded. Students are also repeatedly expected to extol the virtues of the "free enterprise system in Texas" and to use the oil, gas and aerospace industries as examples. In fact, at least since Alexander Hamilton, the U.S. has never been a laissez-faire, free enterprise society. Many states and the federal government have promoted specific sectors of the economy, and denied support to others, through tax policies, tariffs and land grants (for example, to railroads in the nineteenth century). The oil and gas industries have benefited from tax breaks (such as the oil depletion allowance), and the aerospace industry has received massive federal support for decades. The development and importance of free enterprise is obviously central to understanding Texas and American history, but students should be encouraged to reach their own conclusions about its virtues and shortcomings. To, in effect, require students to espouse a particular ideological viewpoint, whether from the left or the right, violates the basic purpose of public education.

The historical material in the TEKS for Kindergarten-Grade12: Social Studies and Economics is sequentially exemplary, admirable in its specificity from the early years to high school, but substantively uneven. In addition, an ideological subtext may discourage teachers from including or thoroughly exploring some essential historical material. A revised, more balanced version of these standards would be both intellectually and educationally advisable.

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UTAH

(Assessment based on Social Studies Core Curriculum: Grades K-6, 2000; Grades 7-12, 2002, Utah State Office of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Utah

Comprehensive Historical Content: 7

Sequential Development: 8

Balance: 7

C

Total Score: 22 (73 percent)

Utah's social studies program, composed of Geography, History, Political Science, Culture (Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology), Economics, and Life Skills, declares that its purpose is to promote active and informed citizenship in a democratic society that is part of a culturally diverse but interdependent world.

Third-grade Utah students are introduced to "indigenous (native) people of the United States," the first settlers, and the Inca of South America, before moving on to Utah history, including "the development of a free market system in Utah," in the fourth grade. United States history begins in the fifth grade; the first half of the curriculum concentrates on the period before 1800, with the remaining half divided between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. "It is not the intent," the course description explains, "that students study the historical events in depth." The history of the New World and later the United States is divided into several "core standards" such as "sequence of events," "development and expansion," "emergence of the United States as a world influence," "contributions of key individuals and groups," and "the role of the Constitution" (without explaining just how "sequence of events" can be meaningfully separated from "contributions of key individuals"). Students review the reasons for the exploration of North America, the development of the colonies, English influence on the colonies, and the factors that brought the colonies together to confront England, and then they skip directly from the Revolution to nineteenth-century westward expansion—without considering the Constitution, the new nation, or the Civil War and Reconstruction. However, major leaders from the Constitution to the Civil War *are* discussed separately under "events and leaders in the United States through the nineteenth century." This artificial division must be confusing to 10-year-old children and places extra burdens on teachers who may attempt to integrate these approaches. In addition, there are virtually no names included; the "objectives" on key leaders do not mention Washington in discussing the Revolution and independence, Lincoln in connection with the Civil War, or FDR in relation to the Great Depression.

After studying Utah history in seventh grade, students return to U.S. history in eighth grade. The survey, from exploration through late nineteenth-century westward expansion, asks students to "Assess the impact of European exploration on African slaves and American Indian nations." The subtopics include "the reasons for slavery in the New World," "the beginnings of the slave trade in the Americas," "the transportation of African slaves to the Americas" and "the destruction of American Indian cultures." There are no explicit references to the critical African role in the slave trade, the importance of slavery in the Caribbean and South America, or the fact that slavery was a worldwide phenomenon. There seems to be a distinct possibility, based on these subtopics, that Utah students might mistakenly conclude that slavery was unique to the United States.

The standard on the settlement and growth of the colonies touches on "the development of self-government in the colonies," and the standard on the Revolution includes "the origin of the ideas behind the revolutionary movement and the movement toward independence; e.g., social contract, natural rights, English traditions." In fact, the coverage from the Revolution through ratification of the Constitution is thorough and balanced, with one notable exception: students are supposed to "Investigate the ideas and documents that became the foundation for the United States Constitution: e.g., Magna Carta, Iroquois Confederation, European philosophers." The second choice, as discussed in the introduction, is politically correct wishful thinking, not history. In addition, the survey jumps from the Constitution to westward expan-

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sion, and ignores the establishment of the new nation in the 1790s. However, the topics for the nineteenth century (through Reconstruction) are among the most comprehensive and challenging in any of the current state history standards (except for the convoluted and synthetic division of the period into ten separate "standards"). There is also a reasonable balance between political, social, and economic history.

The Utah U.S. history sequence concludes in high school (presumably in tenth grade) with a survey from 1876 to the present, beginning with a review of the colonial period through Reconstruction. The material is quite detailed but, unlike the eighth-grade survey, political history is all but missing. Progressivism is mentioned, for example, but there is nothing specific on the state and national reforms promoted by leaders such as Robert LaFollette, Albert Beveridge and Theodore Roosevelt. Similarly, although students are asked to "Investigate the emerging civil rights movement," the survey skips over the rise of Jim Crow, black disenfranchisement and sharecropping in the South after Reconstruction. Some of the "objectives" are historically puzzling: for example, "Identify how American cities spawned [?] American architecture" and "Analyze the development of socialism in the United States." As in fifth grade, the Great Depression, the New Deal and World War II are discussed without mentioning FDR.

The Utah U.S. history sequence is sometimes outstanding (as in the eighth-grade topics from the Revolution through Reconstruction). But the gaps discussed above, particularly those in the high school survey since Reconstruction, do require significant revision, clarification and rewriting.

VERMONT

(Assessment based on Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities, 2000, Vermont Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Vermont

Comprehensive Historical Content: 2

Sequential Development: 5

Balance: 5

F

Total Score: 12 (40 percent)

The Vermont standards, according to their authors, "identify the essential knowledge and skills that should be taught and learned in school. Essential knowledge is what students should *know* [emphasis in original]. It includes the most important and enduring ideas, issues, dilemmas, principles, and concepts from the disciplines."

Vermont's framework divides historical investigation and critical evaluation into three themes: causes and effects in human societies, uses of evidence and data, and analyzing knowledge. History itself is explored in three categories: historical connections, traditional and social histories, and "being a historian." Pre-K-4 U.S. history concentrates on "how democratic values came to be" and how people like Washington, Lincoln, and Martin Luther King, Jr., "have exemplified them."

Vermont history in grades 5-8 covers three historical eras: the Colonization Era (1609-1774), the Revolutionary/New State era (1775-1791), and the Agricultural, Industrial, Social Transition Era (1791-1860). United States history, apparently in eighth grade, deals with Native Cultures to 1600, Colonization (1500-1774), the Revolutionary/New State Era (1775-1791) and Expansion (1791-1890). The Vermont standards, however, supply virtually no content details. Nonetheless, for the Revolutionary period, students are expected to "investigate the political, social and economic causes of the American Revolution" and to "ana-

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lyze the ideas and institutions [?] in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights."

In high school Vermont history (grades 9-12), students consider The Growth and Emergence of the Modern Vermont Era (1860-1930), specifically the impact of the Civil War and industrial change; for The Modern [Vermont] Era (1930-present), they cover the growth of "cultural diversity, and the great depression, WWI and WWII." United States history in high school, on the other hand, covers the Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877), the Emergence of Modern America (1877-1930), the Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945), and the Post War United States (1945-present). The "specific" subtopics, however, could not be more general: for example, "analyze the causes and effects of WWI and the US role in the world," and "analyze the causes and effects of the Great Depression and identify policies designed to fix it." From Pre-K to high school, the Vermont U.S. standards never mention the names of real historical figures or refer to specific historical events except in topic headings.

Nonetheless, the Vermont standards insist that "the basis of the framework is Vermont's Common Core of Learning." In fact, to cite just one example, the so-called "Fields of Knowledge Standards" for the category labeled "historical connections" are so vague as to be educationally useless: "Students identify major historical eras...in various times in their local community, in Vermont, in the United States, and in various locations world wide." Except for a few additional references to "the basic principles of democracy" in the "Types of Government" standard or the "impact of voluntary and involuntary migration" in the "Movements and Settlements" standard, the Vermont framework has essentially no history, no standards, and only the most amorphous learning opportunities. For example, in the "Conflicts and Conflict Resolution" standard, students are expected to "Explain a conflict (e.g., Labor issues, Revolutionary War) by recognizing the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those directly and indirectly involved in the conflict."

As they stand, the Vermont "Framework of Standards" for American history are virtually devoid of substance and a disservice to the state's teachers, parents and students.

VIRGINIA

(Assessment based on History and Social Science Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools, 2001, Board of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia)

STATE REPORT CARD

Virginia

Comprehensive Historical Content: 7

Sequential Development: 10

Balance: 8

B

Total Score: 25 (83 percent)

Virginia's 1995 Standards of Learning in history have been rated as one of the best frameworks in the nation.[22] In 2000, however, the Virginia General Assembly "directed the Board of Education to establish a cycle for periodic review and revision of the Standards of Learning." That revision, after much debate across the Commonwealth, was released early in 2001.

The new Virginia Standards of Learning assert, as in 1995, that "History should be the integrative core of the curriculum." Virginia K-1 children get their first introduction to U.S. history with "legends, stories and historical accounts" about significant historical figures (e.g., Washington, Franklin, Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., Pocahontas, and Betsy Ross) and important national holidays. The expectation in 1995 that these young students would also learn about "basic concepts involving historical time sequence" and "construct time lines" has been dropped. In grade 2, Virginia children explore "the heritage and contributions" of ancient peoples and the "American Indians (First Americans)."[23]

Students move on to "Virginia's rich history," from first inhabitants to the present, in the fourth grade. The period from 1607 through the American Revolution, now described as the era of "Colonization and Conflict," includes essential new topics on the origins and significance of slavery and on relations with Native Americans in early Virginia—subjects virtually ignored in 1995. The topics from the colonial era through the Revolution

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and the Constitution are remarkably detailed and challenging for 9-year-old students. The material on the nineteenth century, on the other hand, which focuses mainly on the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the rise of Jim Crow in Virginia, is quite sketchy, and the topics on twentieth-century Virginia touch on little more than industrialization, urbanization, and the later turmoil over desegregation.

Virginia students in grades 5 and 6 survey American history from the pre-Columbian era to 1877 and from 1877 to the present. Again, the topics on the period before 1800 are quite comprehensive and especially noteworthy, in contrast to 1995's, for including significant entries on African Americans and Native Americans. On the other hand, when addressing the "characteristics of West African societies (Ghana, Mali, and Songhai) and their interactions with traders," the standards are conspicuously evasive. Nothing suggests that Virginia students will learn that these "interactions" included Africans abducting and selling millions of other Africans into slavery in the West. Also, the new topics, unlike 1995's, largely ignore the importance of democratic institutions and values in the colonies, except for a brief reference to the ideas of John Locke. They also leave out the writing of the federal (and state) constitutions. In addition, the historical content for the period from 1801 to 1877 is sparse and uneven, never discussing political history (such as the election of 1800 or Jacksonian Democracy), antebellum reform movements, Indian removal, the sectional crises from the Missouri Compromise to the Dred Scott decision, or conflicting positions on Reconstruction. In addition, references to the Emancipation Proclamation and the Gettysburg Address have been dropped.

The topics on the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries are again quite general, mentioning immigration, industrialization and urbanization and the rise of Jim Crow, but ignoring politics (particularly Populism), the New South, and the Indian wars, and failing to refer to any specific Progressive leaders or their reforms. The topics on World War I do not include the bitter struggle over American entry into the League of Nations, the 1929 stock market crash is missing, Herbert Hoover is not mentioned in the topic on the Great Depression, and not a single New Deal reform is discussed. Indeed, there is no topic on the permanent transformation of American government, society and politics wrought by FDR's New Deal.

The Virginia U.S. history sequence concludes in high school with a full-year survey of American history from early explorations to post-World War II. At this grade level, the Jacksonian era and antebellum Indian policies are covered, but the election of 1800, social reform movements and the political crises leading to the Civil War are still not explicitly discussed. In the post-Reconstruction era, the conflicting positions of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois have been included, but the decimation of Native Americans and the significance of Populism are still omitted. Likewise, the conflict over the League of Nations has been added, but Progressivism and the New Deal are again touched on only very generally. The material on World War II, especially the home front, the Cold War and the Civil Rights movement, is substantially more inclusive than in the introductory survey. Yet, McCarthyism and the Red Scare of the 1950s are again omitted. In fact, the new standards contain far fewer names of American historical figures than the 1995 version.

The 2001 Virginia U.S. history sequence, despite some important additions, seems somewhat less historically substantive than the earlier version (especially in political history). The Virginia standards are still very good—but they are uneven and not quite as comprehensive and demanding as they were in 1995.

WASHINGTON

(Assessment based on Washington's Essential Academic Learning Requirements, 1998 (refined April 2002); Social Studies Frameworks: K-5, 6-8, 9-12, June 2002, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction)

STATE REPORT CARD

Washington

Comprehensive Historical Content: 2

Sequential Development: 2

Balance: 1

F

Total Score: **5 (17 percent)**

The introduction to Washington's Essential Academic Learning Requirements declares that "Growing numbers of citizens who care about education have been working together to create what will be the driver of reform—higher academic standards." After much public debate, standards were written with the goal of providing "clear targets for teachers and students across the state" by defining "the specific academic skills and knowledge students will be required to meet in the classroom."

After reading these claims, it is quite a letdown to read the Washington "essential" K-12 social studies academic learning standards. The entire section for history, geography, civics and economics is just over twenty pages long, and the history portion totals barely six pages. History begins in fourth grade with Washington State history and continues in fifth grade with a U.S. survey (from the pre-Columbian period to the middle of the nineteenth century). Students are asked to "describe and compare patterns of life over time" in the following historical periods: Indian cultures (prehistory to 1492); Worlds Meet: Western Europe, West Africa, the Americas; Settlement and Colonization (1607-1776); Revolution and Constitution (1754-1789); and U.S. Expansion (1776-1850). Students are also supposed to "describe life in the early U.S. both before and after European contact" and "Explain how an idea has affected the way people live" (e.g., free speech and separation of church and state). The reader of this very thin outline is tempted to ask: How? Based on what?

Eighth-grade U.S. history, from the Revolution to 1900 (after additional Washington State history in the seventh grade), does not raise the bar at all. Students will presumably "Identify and analyze major issues, people, and events in U.S. history," from the Revolution, Constitution and New Nation (1763-1820) through Expansion and Reform (1801-1861), Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877), and Industrialization, Immigration, Urbanization (1870-1900). Despite the lack of specific historical content in these standards, students will somehow put "particular emphasis on change and continuity, *for example, revolution, the emergence of sectional differences, and the Civil War*" [emphasis in original].

High school U.S. history (in grade 11) continues the same scheme, asking students to "Identify and analyze major concepts, people, and events in the [*sic*] 20th century U.S. History," from the Emergence of America as a world power (1898-1918); through reform, prosperity and depression [no dates], WWII, the Cold War and International Relations (1939-present); and Post-World War II domestic, political, social, and economic issues (1945-present). This time around, again without clear historical content, students are expected to put "particular emphasis on growth and conflict, *for example, industrialization, the civil rights movement, and the information age*" [emphasis in original].

The Washington U.S. history standards seem to demand little more of high school students than of fifth graders. All the "topics" are uselessly general, and the high school topics in particular are often carelessly written. It is inconceivable that parents would conclude that these standards, which mention only a few actual people and very few specific events, provide effective historical knowledge or clear targets for teachers or students.

In 2002, perhaps in response to consistently low national ratings, Washington State produced three additional "Social Studies Frameworks" for grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The fifth-grade framework does add useful study points about encounters between native peoples and Europeans, the motives for European settlements, why "enslaved Africans" were brought to the colonies, "how African people were imported as slaves to the

colonies" [nothing in the framework suggests that teachers or students will explore the *whole* story of the African slave trade], the perspectives of loyalists and patriots, and the "grievances and infractions [*sic*] imposed on the colonists." But there is also a presentistic undercurrent; students are instructed, for example, without any apparent reference to the larger historical context, to recognize "the inconsistencies stated in the Declaration of Independence and the conditions of the time (e.g., slavery, women [*sic*] rights)."

The eighth-grade framework is also chronologically slipshod and badly written. It jumps from the causes of the Revolution and the strengths and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation to the War of 1812, inaccurately described as "the first test of [*sic*] new nations [*sic*] ability to survive," before going back to the origins of political parties in the 1790s. Students are also asked to "Describe the growing influence of [*sic*] common man under Jacksonian democracy."

Parents will not find much relief from this pattern in the eleventh-grade framework. Some of the historical benchmarks are blatantly biased: "Analyze the reasons the United States is an imperialist nation;" "Explain reasons that African American pride and militancy replaced assimilation and accommodation of an earlier age." Others are either tendentious and/or marginally literate: "Examine the impact of nuclear power on political, social, and cultural arenas;" "Evaluate the global impact of the growing power of multinational and supranational corporations on global economy and overwhelming independence;" "Compare and contrast the rise of the suburban affluent middle class with groups left out of the American dream."

It is ironic and revealing that the state named for one of the most important figures in American history does not appear to mention his name in its "Essential Requirements" and "Social Studies Frameworks." Washington State's race to achieve reform and higher academic standards is stuck at the starting gate.

WEST VIRGINIA

(Assessment based on West Virginia Instructional Goals and Objectives for Social Studies, 2001, West Virginia Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

West Virginia

Comprehensive Historical Content: 1

Sequential Development: 1

Balance: 2 (NA)

F

Total Score: 4 (13 percent)

West Virginia's Instructional Goals and Objectives (IGOs) for Social Studies (Citizenship, Civics/government, economics, geography, and history) are, according to its authors, intended to identify what students should know and be able to do.

American history begins in the fourth grade with an introduction to "the growth of America through its colonization, assimilation of immigrant groups, development of improved technology, and major historical figures." However, the survey has little or no chronological coherence, and the history IGOs are often excessively general for both teachers and students: e.g., "identify major leaders and events from America's colonization to the Civil War;" "identify Presidents of the United States and their involvement with major historical events;" "identify major United States historical figures, their contributions, and their involvement related to specific events;" explain how African Americans came to America and list their accomplishments." No names of historical figures are mentioned in this U.S. history introduction, a pattern that persists, with few exceptions, through high school.

The IGOs for fifth-grade U.S. history, "a basic overview of the history of the United States from the age of exploration to the present," seem somewhat more chronologically consistent. However, many are still absurdly general (e.g., "interpret quotes from famous

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Americans from various periods of history;" "identify causes, major events, and important people of the Civil War;" "identify and explain social and technological changes that took place during the Industrial Revolution in the United States;" "identify the causes and effects of World War I and World War II." A few IGOs are more reasonable ("describe problems faced by Washington when he became the first United States president"), but the IGOs alone simply do not provide sufficient detail about the content of this West Virginia U.S. history survey.

American history resumes in ninth grade (after an eighth-grade course on the history of West Virginia). The survey begins with pre-Columbian civilizations and concludes with the emergence of the U.S. as a world power at the beginning of the twentieth century. Some important history is found in the Civics IGOs (e.g., "analyze the content of the Declaration of Independence and the factors that led to its creation"). The history IGOs, however, continue to be far too general for either teaching or learning (e.g., "analyze the factors that led to settlement and expansion across the United States;" "explain United States conflicts in terms of causes and effects;" "compare the political, economic, and social conditions in the United States before and after the Civil War;" "evaluate the effects of technological change on the United States"). One IGO is both historically and semantically baffling: "analyze the effect of European empire building and how it led to the American Revolution."

West Virginia abandons any semblance of a U.S. history sequence after ninth grade. Twentieth-century and recent American history are incorporated, at least theoretically, into a grade 11 survey examining "the increasing interdependency of the United States and the world" and "the importance of well-informed citizens in a diverse society." The sad reality is that U.S. history essentially vanishes from the curriculum; students apparently graduate without ever studying Progressivism, the New Deal, or the Reagan era. Instead, teachers and students are subjected to substantively vacuous IGOs: "describe the growth and development of social, economic, and political reforms;" "analyze the advent and implications of the Nuclear Age;" "identify major historical events in chronological order." Other IGOs are subtly biased and badly written, for example: "assess the impact of United States foreign policy on different world regions"; "critique United States immigration policies and analyze the contributions of immigrant groups and individuals, and ethnic conflict and discrimination;" (Will students also learn about the successful immigration to the U.S. of millions upon millions of people from every corner of the globe—a record unmatched in all of human history?) "identify the Supreme Court decision which institutionalized slavery" [presumably an historically erroneous reference to the Dred Scott decision].

West Virginia has virtually guaranteed that its students will complete their public education without anything approaching a solid grasp of American history. It is to be hoped that parents, teachers, and students will recognize that these Instructional Goals and Objectives in social studies contain virtually no history, no realistic learning goals, and no achievable educational objectives.

WISCONSIN

(Assessment based on Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards for Social Studies, revised 1999; Planning Curriculum in Social Studies, 2000; Content and Learning [Web site Overview of Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for Social Studies], 2003, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction)

STATE REPORT CARD

Wisconsin

Comprehensive Historical Content: 1

Sequential Development: 1

Balance: 2 (NA)

F

Total Score: 4 (13 percent)

In a summary of Wisconsin social studies standards on the Internet, state education officials recommend several "best practic ." to teachers, including using "multiple kinds of measures" to assess student progress. "The spotlight is now on 'what the student has learned'

not on 'what the teacher has taught.'" This statement does not augur well for what we will find in the standards themselves. Social studies jargon aside, this notion of a sharp distinction between what is taught and what is learned is a rhetorical cliché of "progressive" education, but in practice its usefulness is very limited. The introduction to the standards also insists on establishing "rigorous goals for teaching and learning" because without such goals, "students may be unmotivated and confused." Defining just what constitutes "rigor" is left for later—much later.

Social studies (e.g., geography, history, political science/citizenship, economics, and the behavioral sciences) begins in the fourth grade with an introduction to Wisconsin history. The content standard for history explains that students will examine "change and continuity over time in order to develop historical perspective." However, the standards provide only a cursory outline of the "historical eras and themes" that students will actually learn about: native people, explorers, settlers and immigration, the transition to statehood, Wisconsin in the Civil War, mining, lumber and agriculture, LaFollette and Progressivism, the world wars, prosperity, depression, industrialization and urbanization, and Wisconsin's response to twentieth-century change. Since the "spotlight" is on what students supposedly learn rather than on what teachers actually teach, the authors of the standards apparently did not find it necessary to set priorities for what U.S. history teachers *should* teach.

United States history is apparently offered in the fifth and eighth grades and again in high school, but the precise sequence and content are nearly impossible to determine from the perfunctory outline of historical eras and themes in the standards (or the general "concepts" in the more recent social studies curriculum planning guide). Parents interested in finding out what their children will learn about American history will quickly discover that the standards merely list sweeping eras (e.g., prehistory, colonial history and settlement, the Revolution and early national period, nationalism and sectionalism, the Civil War and Reconstruction, the industrial era, World War I, the depression and the New Deal, World War II and the Cold War, the post-Cold War).

The Wisconsin standards are nonetheless filled with grandiose assertions about what students will be able to do. By the end of the fourth grade, for example, they will "Compare and contrast changes in contemporary life with life in the past by looking at social, economic, political, and cultural roles played by individuals and groups;" by the end of the eighth grade, pupils will "Analyze important political values such as freedom, democracy, equality, and justice embodied in documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights;" and by the end of the twelfth grade, students will "Assess the validity of different interpretations of significant historical events."

The Wisconsin Model Academic Standards will apparently achieve these extraordinary results without providing a clue to Wisconsin teachers about the substantive historical content that *should* be taught. In addition, the standards do not delineate a sequence in U.S. history. At what grade, for example, will the American Revolution or the Civil War be studied? Will they be examined only once or several times at increasing levels of complexity in different grades? Finally, the standards are all but anonymous—mentioning virtually no people, events, or ideas.

The Wisconsin social studies model, despite its "student-centered" rhetoric, has squeezed the life and context out of American history, virtually assuring that students will indeed become "unmotivated and confused." Parents, teachers and other concerned Wisconsinites should badger the state into making major improvements.

WYOMING

(Assessment based on Wyoming Social Studies Content and Performance Standards, 1999, Wyoming Department of Education)

STATE REPORT CARD

Wyoming

Comprehensive Historical Content: 0

Sequential Development: 0

Balance: 2 (NA)

F

Total Score: 2 (7 percent)

The rationale for the Wyoming standards declares, in oft-repeated language, that the mission of social studies "is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world." However, the introduction goes on, the content and performance standards, as well as the benchmarks for measuring knowledge achieved by the end of the K-4, 5-8 and 9-12 grade spans, "do not prescribe curriculum, courses, or instructional methodology." Instead, they serve only as a "framework" for the content knowledge that will be required for graduation from Wyoming high schools beginning in 2004. The introduction also assures Wyoming parents that about a dozen state standards, including those of California, Indiana, Massachusetts, New York and Virginia, were consulted in order to "establish the rigor" of the Wyoming social studies standards.

However, Wyoming parents looking to these standards for core content in American history will be sorely disappointed. In fact, history is barely recognized as a distinct academic discipline in the Wyoming standards. Instead, Wyoming has adopted the hackneyed and familiar seven strands from the familiar National Council for the Social Studies: Citizenship, Government and Democracy; Culture and Cultural Diversity; Production, Distribution and Consumption; Time, Continuity and Change; Peoples, Places and Environments; Social Studies Processes and Skills; Technology. The "formal study of history," which provides an "understanding of the past and of historical perspectives," is presumably subsumed within the fourth strand, "Time, Continuity, and Change."

The Wyoming performance standards will presumably rate fourth-grade students as "Advanced Performance" in American history if they can analyze, under "Time, Continuity, and Change," "the historical significance of national holidays, symbols, and historical figures who contributed to the growth and development of our country." Likewise, the most proficient eighth-grade students will supposedly be capable, under "Citizenship, Government and Democracy," of explaining the branches of the federal government and "the issues involved in the development of the U.S. Constitution." The same students, under "Time, Continuity, and Change," should be able to "analyze and discuss the complex relationships between people, events, problems, conflicts, and ideas, and explain their historical significance and parallels to present day conditions, situations and circumstances."

"Advanced Performance" eleventh-grade U.S. history students, again under "Time, Continuity, and Change," will apparently "provide evidence of the impact of key people, places, and events that have shaped history and continue to impact today's world." In addition, under "Citizenship, Government, and Democracy," they will "describe and analyze the basic rights and responsibilities of a democratic society, including *multiple examples* of how they have participated in the political process." Students who are merely "Proficient" in citizenship will have to include only *one example* of their participation and "Partially Proficient" students will have to identify only *some* basic rights and responsibilities and include an example of how they *plan* to participate in the democratic process [italics added]. "No Proficiency" apparently does not exist in this scheme of educational make-believe.

The inescapable fact is that Wyoming's social studies content standards contain neither historical content nor measurable standards. Indeed, American history, to the degree to which it survives at all in the "Time, Continuity, and Change" strand, is never specifically identified or differentiated from Wyoming history or

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even world history. There is no plan for sequential development in U.S. history because there is no subject matter to be developed. The benchmarks and performance standards do not mention people, events, issues or ideas from American history or any other history. How can these benchmarks possibly measure the historical knowledge required for graduation when they fail to identify or include any real history? The only "rigor" in the Wyoming standards is a peculiar form of intellectual and educational *rigor mortis*.

Conclusions and Recommendations

With far too few bright spots, state standards for U.S. history are a parade of mediocrity, as is clear in Table 2 (page 95). Six states did earn "outstanding" grades, and five more received "very good" grades for their U.S. history standards—which proves that the task *can* be done well—but overall, standards for the vast majority of states were either "weak" or "ineffective." Eight states were judged to have weak standards (earning a grade of D); twenty-two states and the District of Columbia were found to have ineffective standards (earning a grade of F). Thus three-fifths of all states have set American history standards that are far below what they need to be. This means most U.S. history teachers enter the classroom without a decent roadmap to guide them, most state accountability systems have no U.S. history component keyed to sound standards, school administrators lack clear guideposts as to what their pupils should be learning in this vital field, and parents and taxpayers have no reliable way to judge children's and schools' performance in U.S. history against substantively credible benchmarks.

With far too few bright spots, state U.S. history standards are a parade of mediocrity. Three-fifths of all states have set standards that are far below what they need to be.

The picture is bleak but not uniformly so. Eleven states have handled this assignment well. Perhaps others—including some that are currently revising their U.S. history standards—will join them. But the dereliction of most states when it comes to framing solid standards for teaching their children about their nation's past poses a major challenge to education reformers, education professionals, and elected officials alike.

As one looks from state to state, no clear trends present themselves. There is, for example, no regional pattern. In fact, neighboring states sometimes scored near opposite ends of the scale (e.g., Alabama and Mississippi, Indiana and Illinois, Massachusetts and Maine, New York and New Jersey). It would be fascinating to investigate how these state standards were written and by whom. How and why were the drafters chosen? What were their educational qualifications or political connections? What does the drafting process reveal about the contentious world of state and local education politics? Some states that I had expected to do well, based on their own histories, traditions, and demographics, fared quite poorly. Others performed far above my expectations and even ranked near the top. So much for expectations.

One can, however, begin to draw some general conclusions about what makes a strong set of standards—and what characterizes a poor one. The strongest standards tend to:

- identify and discuss real people; that is, they have a biographical dimension.
- have a clear chronology and coherent sequence beginning in the early grades.
- revisit topics covered in early grades (such as colonial history) in later grades, and do so in a more thorough and sophisticated way.
- emphasize America's European origins while also recognizing the important contributions of non-Western people.
- discuss the origins and development of democratic ideas and institutions as well as the evolution of slavery.
- highlight the growing tensions between slavery and freedom in the eighteenth century.
- give political history equal status with social and cultural history.
- be comprehensive and replete with specific historical information. If there is too much material to cover realistically in a term or year, it is far better to have surplus content than not enough or none at all.
- be balanced and free of overt or covert ideological agendas.

- encourage students to learn to "think historically" and avoid presentism.
- be written in strong, vigorous, clear English prose.

By contrast, the weakest state U.S. history standards characteristically:

- are shackled by pervasive "social studies" assumptions about history education, particularly the belief that chronology doesn't really matter.
- are "anonymous" or nearly anonymous; real people and events are rarely named.
- lack specific historical content and substantive details.
- are chronologically muddled and confused.
- fail to build sequentially on knowledge from earlier grades.
- are especially weak in the early grades (often the only level at which colonial history is taught).
- are deficient in political history (particularly egregious because the U.S., to a remarkable degree, still operates under the political system created in 1787).
- are undermined by presentism (which sometimes appears even in some of the better standards).
- are politically and ideologically tendentious, reflecting the conviction that U.S. history courses exist to indoctrinate rather than educate students.
- substitute wishful thinking or politically correct ideology for factual accuracy (e.g., the alleged—and completely unsubstantiated—Iroquois impact on the Constitution, omitting the African role in the Atlantic slave trade, or sanitizing human sacrifice and slavery in pre-Colombian civilizations).
- are often written in vacuous or even disingenuous edu-jargon that gives the reader no real hint about what is actually being taught.

What is to be done? Educators, elected officials and parents should recognize that the single most decisive step toward achieving strong U.S. history standards in all states would be to emancipate this subject from the miasma of social studies. American youngsters must be introduced, starting in the earliest grades, to genuine academic disciplines like history, economics, geography and political science rather than the nebulous, anti-historical, and a-historical invention called "social studies." Even the federal Department of Education has recently recommended, in the guidelines for its Teaching American History grant program, that U.S. history should be taught as an academic subject rather than as a component of social studies.[24]

The single most decisive step toward achieving strong U.S. history standards in all states would be to emancipate this subject from the miasma of social studies.

The findings from this study of state U.S. history standards confirm that the social studies curriculum, in the words of Kieran Egan, "has not worked, does not work, and cannot work" because it consistently underestimates teacher knowledge and student intelligence and is inherently contemptuous of historical method and understanding.

As historian Paul Fussell has observed, "Understanding the past requires pretending you don't know the present." Social studies, on the contrary, cultivates presentism by making history (where it survives at all) focus on the socialization of the student in the present. "History takes the students' attention away from themselves," Egan points out, because, unlike the vacuous and synthetic categories of social studies, it is "full of vividness, drama, real heroes and heroines, and endless engagement."[25]

Good history standards also call for great history teachers—teachers who have been trained in history, teachers who love to read history and teachers who understand the importance of history. Few dispute the relationship between teacher quality and student achievement. States must therefore lift the bar for history teachers. Jurisdictions that are seriously committed to raising student achievement in history should require that new teachers of that essential subject possess a bachelor's degree *in history* and, for retention and promotion, a master's degree *in history* within a contractually agreed upon number of years. Degrees in education should no longer be acceptable.

Despite today's manifold obstacles, there is some cause for optimism that states can rise to this challenge. Note, once again, that eleven sets of U.S. history standards ranked high and more than half of those were outstanding. Rigorous, clear, and coherent U.S. history standards can be written—and have been written—even by committees of non-historians and despite relentless political pressure from special interests on the left and right. Can other states learn from the standards of those that have done well? There is every reason to demand that they do so.

About the author

Sheldon M. Stern earned a Ph.D. in history from Harvard, and served as historian at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library for twenty-three years, where he directed the American History Project for High School Students from 1993-1999. He is the author of numerous articles in history education, the first draft of *Building a United States History Curriculum* (published in1997 by the National Council for History Education), and the *United States History Syllabi for What Elementary Teachers Need to Know: College Course Outlines for Teacher Preparation* (published in 2002 by the Core Knowledge Foundation). His book, *Averting 'The Final Failure': John F. Kennedy and the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis Meetings*, was recently published by Stanford University Press. In 1998, Dr. Stern was co-director of the *Massachusetts Department of Education-National Council for History Education* two-week summer institute to implement the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework. He is also the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2003 New England History Teachers Association Hicks-Kennedy Award for Service to History Teachers.

Endnotes

[1] *State High School Exit Exams Put to the Test*, Center on Education Policy, August 2003

[2] David McCullough, *John Adams*, 2002, p. 223.

[3] Paul Gagnon, *Educating Democracy: State Standards to Ensure a Civic Core*, Albert Shanker Institute, 2003.

[4] Perhaps "History Essentials" or "Priority History Essentials" would convey the need for substantive historical content more plainly than the somewhat ambiguous term "History Standards."

[5] Richard Bernstein, *Dictatorship of Virtue*, 1994, p. 283.

[6] The Fordham Institute is also sponsoring a comprehensive assessment, directed by Diane Ravitch, of the historical reliability of current textbooks in United States and world history.

[7] American Council of Trustees and Alumni, *Losing America's Memory: Historical Illiteracy in the 21st Century, 2000*, p. 2.

[8] "The Danger of Historical Amnesia: A Conversation with David McCullough," *Humanities*, July/August 2002, pp. 4-5; Christopher Lasch, *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy*, 1995, pp. 5-6.

[9] Will Fitzhugh, "The State of the Term Paper," *Education Week*, January 16, 2002, pp. 35, 37; for a list of paper topics published in *The Concord Review*, see their Web site [http://www.tcr.org].

[10] Howard W. French, "On Slavery, Africans Say the Guilt is Theirs, Too," *New York Times*, December 27, 1994; see also, Charles Johnson and Patricia Smith, *Africans in America: America's Journey Through Slavery*, 1998, pp. 60-76 and Paul Finkelman and Joseph C. Miller eds., *Macmillan Encyclopedia of World Slavery*, Volume I, 1998, pp. 29-39; *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 29, 2003.

[11] The *Boston Globe* ran the following news brief in 2000: "Richmond [Virginia] – Officials from Benin apologized during a ceremony here for their country's role in once selling fellow Africans by the millions to white slave traders. The group is making several stops inVirginia and Washington, D.C., to publicize President Mathieu Kerekou's recent apologies for his country's participation in the slave trade. 'We cry for forgiveness and reconciliation,' said Luc Gnacadja, minister of environment and housing for Benin. Benin, a country of 4.7 million, was known as Dahomey in the 17th century, when it was a supplier of slaves."

[12] See, for example, Philip Burnham, "Selling Poor Steven, The Struggles and Torments of a Forgotten Class in Antebellum America: Black Slaveowners," *American Heritage*, February/March 1993, pp. 90-97.

[13] Cited in Byron Hollinshead, "American Freedom: Whose Is It?," *History Matters!*, March 2003, p. 7.

[14] Lance Banning, "The Revolutionary Context of the Great Convention," *This Constitution: Our Enduring Legacy*, 1986, p. 24.

[15] The 2002 Massachusetts history framework replaces the 1997 version, which this author commended for its comprehensive historical content; see Sheldon M. Stern, "Improving History for All Students: The Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework," *Journal of Education*, 1998, pp. 1-13.

[16] See Diane Ravitch, "Instead of the Academic Curriculum," in *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*, 2000, pp. 162-201.

[17] For discussions of the widespread use of such trivial and educationally vacuous activities, see Gilbert T. Sewall, "Lost in Action," *American Educator*, Summer 2000, pp. 4-9, 42-43; and "The 'Crayola' Curriculum," *School Reform News*, June 2003, p. 7.

[18] See, for example, Ronald Segal, *Islam's Black Slaves: The Other Black Diaspora*, 2001. Slavery persists today in Sudan and Mauritania, and slaves are still being exported to other Islamic nations. Teachers can learn about the current African slave trade on the Web site of the American Anti-Slavery Group (http://www.anti-slavery.org).

[19] See, for example, Daniel Richter, "War and Culture: the Iroquois Experience," in Stanley N. Katz, *et. al.*, eds., *Colonial America: Essays in Politics and Social Development*, 1993, 201-234.

[20] For an analysis of the origins of this counterfeit line, see Sheldon M. Stern, "William Allen White and the Origins of the Coolidge Stereotype," *New England Journal of History*, Fall 1998, pp. 60-61.

[21] Only one higher education representative is actually identified on the revision committee (a social science education professor who is also president of the Tennessee Council for the Social Studies).

[22] David Warren Saxe, *State History Standards*, Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, 1997, p. 39.

[23] The term "American Indians" in the new Virginia standards is invariably followed by the words "(First Americans)."

[24] For a lucid and up-to-date analysis of the social studies conundrum, see James Leming, Lucien Ellington, and Kathleen Porter, eds., *Where Did Social Studies Go Wrong?* Thomas B, Fordham Foundation, 2003.

[25] Kieran Egan, "Social Studies and the Erosion of Education," in *Children's Minds, Talking Rabbits and Clockwork Oranges*," 1999, pp. 131-146; Paul Fussell, *Thank God for the Atom Bomb and Other Essays*, 1988, p. 10

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Appendix

Table 1: 2003 Scores, listed alphabetically by state

State	2003 Grade	Overall rank	Total Score (out of 30)	Percentage	Comprehensive Historical Content (score out of 10)	Sequential Development (score out of 10)	Balance (score out of 10)
Alabama	A	3	27	90%	9	10	8
Alaska	F	46	2	7%	0	0	2
Arizona	A	3	27	90%	7	10	10
Arkansas	F	46	2	7%	0	0	2
California	A	3	27	90%	8	10	9
Colorado	D	22	16	53%	6	5	5
Connecticut	D	25	15	50%	5	5	5
Delaware	B	7	25	83%	8	10	7
District of Columbia	F	28	12	40%	4	4	4
Florida	D	21	17	57%	5	5	7
Georgia	B	7	25	83%	7	9	9
Hawaii	F	36	8	27%	3	3	2
Idaho	D	22	16	53%	6	6	4
Illinois	F	41	4	13%	1	1	2
Indiana	A	1	29	97%	9	10	10
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	B	7	25	83%	7	8	10
Kentucky	F	34	9	30%	3	3	3
Louisiana	D	25	15	50%	5	5	5
Maine	F	46	2	7%	0	0	2
Maryland	C	15	21	70%	8	5	8
Massachusetts	A	3	27	90%	8	9	10
Michigan	F	34	9	30%	3	3	3
Minnesota	F	38	5	17%	2	1	2
Mississippi	F	28	12	40%	4	4	4
Missouri	F	33	10	33%	3	3	4
Montana	F	37	6	20%	2	2	2

State	2003 Grade	Overall rank	Total Score (out of 30)	Percentage	Comprehensive Historical Content (score out of 10)	Sequential Development (score out of 10)	Balance (score out of 10)
Nebraska	C	15	21	70%	7	10	4
Nevada	C	12	22	73%	7	7	8
New Hampshire	F	27	13	43%	5	4	4
New Jersey	F	28	12	40%	5	4	3
New Mexico	F	28	12	40%	4	4	4
New York	A	2	28	93%	9	10	9
North Carolina	F	38	5	17%	2	1	2
North Dakota	F	41	4	13%	1	1	2
Ohio	D	19	18	60%	7	4	7
Oklahoma	B	7	25	83%	7	8	10
Oregon	D	22	16	53%	6	5	5
Pennsylvania	F	41	4	13%	1	1	2
Rhode Island	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
South Carolina	C	18	20	67%	6	7	7
South Dakota	D	19	18	60%	6	5	7
Tennessee	C	12	22	73%	6	8	8
Texas	C	15	21	70%	7	10	4
Utah	C	12	22	73%	7	8	7
Vermont	F	28	12	40%	2	5	5
Virginia	B	7	25	83%	7	10	8
Washington	F	38	5	17%	2	2	1
West Virginia	F	41	4	13%	1	1	2
Wisconsin	F	41	4	13%	1	1	2
Wyoming	F	46	2	7%	0	0	2

* There were no U.S history or social studies standards as of May 15, 2003

Table 2: 2003 U.S. History Standards, by state rank

Rank	State	Grades	Total Score (out of 30)	Percentage	Evaluation
1	Indiana	A	29	97%	Outstanding
2	New York	A	28	93%	Outstanding
3	Alabama	A	27	90%	Outstanding
3	Arizona	A	27	90%	Outstanding
3	California	A	27	90%	Outstanding
3	Massachusetts	A	27	90%	Outstanding
7	Delaware	B	25	83%	Very good
7	Georgia	B	25	83%	Very good
7	Kansas	B	25	83%	Very good
7	Oklahoma	B	25	83%	Very good
7	Virginia	B	25	83%	Very good
12	Nevada	C	22	73%	Fair
12	Tennessee	C	22	73%	Fair
12	Utah	C	22	73%	Fair
15	Maryland	C	21	70%	Fair
15	Nebraska	C	21	70%	Fair
15	Texas	C	21	70%	Fair
18	South Carolina	C	20	67%	Fair
19	Ohio	D	18	60%	Weak
19	South Dakota	D	18	60%	Weak
21	Florida	D	17	57%	Weak
22	Colorado	D	16	53%	Weak
22	Idaho	D	16	53%	Weak
22	Oregon	D	16	53%	Weak
25	Connecticut	D	15	50%	Weak
25	Louisiana	D	15	50%	Weak
27	New Hampshire	F	13	43%	Ineffective
28	District of Columbia	F	12	40%	Ineffective
28	Mississippi	F	12	40%	Ineffective
28	New Jersey	F	12	40%	Ineffective

Rank	State	Grades	Total Score (out of 30)	Percentage	Evaluation
28	New Mexico	F	12	40%	Ineffective
28	Vermont	F	12	40%	Ineffective
33	Missouri	F	10	33%	Ineffective
34	Kentucky	F	9	30%	Ineffective
34	Michigan	F	9	30%	Ineffective
36	Hawaii	F	8	27%	Ineffective
37	Montana	F	6	20%	Ineffective
38	Minnesota	F	5	17%	Ineffective
38	North Carolina	F	5	17%	Ineffective
38	Washington	F	5	17%	Ineffective
41	Illinois	F	4	13%	Ineffective
41	North Dakota	F	4	13%	Ineffective
41	Pennsylvania	F	4	13%	Ineffective
41	West Virginia	F	4	13%	Ineffective
41	Wisconsin	F	4	13%	Ineffective
46	Alaska	F	2	7%	Ineffective
46	Arkansas	F	2	7%	Ineffective
46	Maine	F	2	7%	Ineffective
46	Wyoming	F	2	7%	Ineffective
*	Iowa	*	*	*	*
*	Rhode Island	*	*	*	*

* There were no U.S history or social studies standards as of May 15, 2003.

Table 3: 2003 U.S. History Standards, by "comprehensive historical content"

Comprehensive Historical Content Rank	Comprehensive Historical Content (out of 10)	State	Overall Ranking	Total Score (out of 30)
1	9	Indiana	1	29
1	9	New York	2	28
1	9	Alabama	3	27
4	8	Massachusetts	3	27
4	8	California	3	27
4	8	Delaware	7	25
4	8	Maryland	15	21
8	7	Arizona	3	27
8	7	Kansas	7	25
8	7	Oklahoma	7	25
8	7	Georgia	7	25
8	7	Virginia	7	25
8	7	Nevada	12	22
8	7	Utah	12	22
8	7	Nebraska	15	21
8	7	Texas	15	21
8	7	Ohio	19	18
18	6	Tennessee	12	22
18	6	South Carolina	18	20
18	6	South Dakota	19	18
18	6	Colorado	22	16
18	6	Oregon	22	16
18	6	Idaho	22	16
24	5	Florida	21	17
24	5	Connecticut	25	15
24	5	Louisiana	25	15
24	5	New Hampshire	27	13
24	5	New Jersey	28	12
29	4	District of Columbia	28	12
29	4	Mississippi	28	12

Comprehensive Historical Content Rank	Comprehensive Historical Content (out of 10)	State	Overall Ranking	Total Score (out of 30)
29	4	New Mexico	28	12
32	3	Missouri	33	10
32	3	Kentucky	34	9
32	3	Michigan	34	9
32	3	Hawaii	36	8
36	2	Vermont	28	12
36	2	Montana	37	6
36	2	Minnesota	38	5
36	2	North Carolina	38	5
36	2	Washington	38	5
41	1	Illinois	41	4
41	1	North Dakota	41	4
41	1	Pennsylvania	41	4
41	1	West Virginia	41	4
41	1	Wisconsin	41	4
46	0	Alaska	46	2
46	0	Arkansas	46	2
46	0	Maine	46	2
46	0	Wyoming	46	2
*	*	Iowa	*	*
*	*	Rhode Island	*	*

* There were no U.S history or social studies standards as of May 15, 2003.

Table 4: 2003 U.S. History Standards, by "sequential development"

Sequential Development Ranking	Sequential Development (score out of 10)	State	Overall Ranking	Total Score (out of 30)
1	10	Indiana	1	29
1	10	New York	2	28
1	10	Arizona	3	27
1	10	California	3	27
1	10	Alabama	3	27
1	10	Virginia	7	25
1	10	Delaware	7	25
1	10	Nebraska	15	21
1	10	Texas	15	21
10	9	Massachusetts	3	27
10	9	Georgia	7	25
12	8	Kansas	7	25
12	8	Oklahoma	7	25
12	8	Tennessee	12	22
12	8	Utah	12	22
16	7	Nevada	12	22
16	7	South Carolina	18	20
18	6	Idaho	22	16
19	5	Maryland	15	21
19	5	South Dakota	19	18
19	5	Florida	21	17
19	5	Colorado	22	16
19	5	Oregon	22	16
19	5	Connecticut	25	15
19	5	Louisiana	25	15
19	5	Vermont	28	12
27	4	Ohio	19	18
27	4	New Hampshire	27	13
27	4	District of Columbia	28	12
27	4	Mississippi	28	12

Sequential Development Ranking	Sequential Development (score out of 10)	State	Overall Ranking	Total Score (out of 30)
27	4	New Mexico	28	12
27	4	New Jersey	28	12
33	3	Missouri	33	10
33	3	Kentucky	34	9
33	3	Michigan	34	9
33	3	Hawaii	36	8
37	2	Montana	37	6
37	2	Washington	38	5
39	1	Minnesota	38	5
39	1	North Carolina	38	5
39	1	Illinois	41	4
39	1	North Dakota	41	4
39	1	Pennsylvania	41	4
39	1	West Virginia	41	4
39	1	Wisconsin	41	4
46	0	Alaska	46	2
46	0	Arkansas	46	2
46	0	Maine	46	2
46	0	Wyoming	46	2
*	*	Iowa	*	*
*	*	Rhode Island	*	*

* There were no U.S history or social studies standards as of May 15, 2003.

Table 5: 2003 U.S. History Scores, by "balance"

Balance Ranking	Balance (out of 10)	State	Overall Ranking	Total Score (out of 30)
1	10	Arizona	3	27
1	10	Indiana	1	29
1	10	Kansas	7	25
1	10	Massachusetts	3	27
1	10	Oklahoma	7	25
6	9	California	3	27
6	9	Georgia	7	25
6	9	New York	2	28
9	8	Alabama	3	27
9	8	Maryland	15	21
9	8	Nevada	12	22
9	8	Tennessee	12	22
9	8	Virginia	7	25
14	7	Delaware	7	25
14	7	Florida	21	17
14	7	Ohio	19	18
14	7	South Carolina	18	20
14	7	South Dakota	19	18
14	7	Utah	12	22
20	5	Colorado	22	16
20	5	Connecticut	25	15
20	5	Louisiana	25	15
20	5	Oregon	22	16
20	5	Vermont	28	12
25	4	District of Columbia	28	12
25	4	Idaho	22	16
25	4	Mississippi	28	12
25	4	Missouri	33	10
25	4	Nebraska	15	21
25	4	New Hampshire	27	13
25	4	New Mexico	28	12

Balance Ranking	Balance (out of 10)	State	Overall Ranking	Total Score (out of 30)
25	4	Texas	15	21
33	3	Kentucky	34	9
33	3	Michigan	34	9
33	3	New Jersey	28	12
36	2	Alaska	46	2
36	2	Arkansas	46	2
36	2	Hawaii	36	8
36	2	Illinois	41	4
36	2	Maine	46	2
36	2	Minnesota	38	5
36	2	Montana	37	6
36	2	North Carolina	38	5
36	2	North Dakota	41	4
36	2	Pennsylvania	41	4
36	2	West Virginia	41	4
36	2	Wisconsin	41	4
36	2	Wyoming	46	2
49	1	Washington	38	5
*	*	Iowa	*	*
*	*	Rhode Island	*	*

* There were no U.S history or social studies standards as of May 15, 2003.

Table 6: Fordham reviews of history standards in 1998 2000, 2003

This is the third time the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation/Institute has graded state standards for history. In the table below, you will find the grade each state has received on each of those three reviews. It is important to note, however, that there are several possible reasons for the variance in scores. First, many states have changed or updated their standards since 1998. Second, the 1998 and 2000 reviews examined state standards for history in general, including their treatment of U.S. *and* world (and other) history. The 2003 review focused specifically on state U.S. history standards. Because of this difference in focus, the criteria by which the states were judged in 2003 are very different than the criteria used for the 1998 and 2000 reviews. Finally, the 1998 and 2000 reviews were conducted by Dr. David Saxe. This year's review was conducted by Dr. Sheldon Stern, with his team of content-area experts.

While there is no way to precisely compare the results from 1998 and 2000 against the results from the 2003 review, it is interesting to note the states that did well in all three reviews (notably California, Massachusetts and Virginia) despite the differences in emphasis, criteria, and reviewer, as well as those states that fared poorly in all three reviews (Colorado, Kentucky, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin).

State	U.S. History Only	U.S. and World History	U.S. and World History
	2003 Grade	2000 Grade	1998 Grade
Alabama	A	B	C
Alaska	F	F	F
Arizona	A	A	***
Arkansas	F	F	F
California	A	A	B
Colorado	D	D	D
Connecticut	D	D	C
Delaware	B	D	F
District of Columbia	F	F	C
Florida	D	C	C
Georgia	B	C	D
Hawaii	F	F	***
Idaho	D	**	***
Illinois	F	F	F
Indiana	A	C	C
Iowa	*	**	***
Kansas	B	B	F
Kentucky	F	D	F
Louisiana	D	C	C
Maine	F	D	D

State	U.S. History Only	U.S. and World History	U.S. and World History
	2003 Grade	2000 Grade	1998 Grade
Maryland	C	B	F
Massachusetts	A	B	B
Michigan	F	F	F
Minnesota	F	F	F
Mississippi	F	C	***
Missouri	F	C	F
Montana	F	**	***
Nebraska	C	C	F
Nevada	C	C	***
New Hampshire	F	C	C
New Jersey	F	F	F
New Mexico	F	F	F
New York	A	D	F
North Carolina	F	D	F
North Dakota	F	F	***
Ohio	D	D	D
Oklahoma	B	B	D
Oregon	D	B	***
Pennsylvania	F	F	F
Rhode Island	*	**	***
South Carolina	C	C	***
South Dakota	D	C	***
Tennessee	C	D	D
Texas	C	B	B
Utah	C	C	C
Vermont	F	F	F
Virginia	B	A	A
Washington	F	F	F
West Virginia	F	C	C
Wisconsin	F	F	F
Wyoming	F	F	***

* There were no U.S history or social studies standards as of May 15, 2003

** There were no history or social studies standards at the time of the 2000 review

*** There were no history or social studies standards at the time of the 1998 review

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